

ISSUE 7 | SEPTEMBER 2011

Fighting Fantazine

THE FIGHTING FANTASY FAN MAGAZINE

**SAILING ON THE
INLAND SEA!**
SEAS OF BLOOD IS
PLUNDERED BY PIRATES IN
ANOTHER **FACT OF FICTION**

**THE DESIGNER
OF GAMES!**
WRITER **GRAEME DAVIS**
CHATS ABOUT
FANTASY GAMING

FANTASY FLASHBACK!
AN INTERVIEW WITH **PAUL STRUTH**
ABOUT HIS WINNING **WARLOCK**
MINI ADVENTURE

PLUS A BRAND NEW BUMPER **FIGHTING FANTASY** ADVENTURE!
CAN **YOU** SURVIVE THE CURSE OF THE **Queen of Shades?**



FIGHTING FANTASY



“A faithful conversion from page to screen in almost every way.”

PocketGamer - 8/10



“For people like me who grew up playing the Fighting Fantasy books, this is obviously a must buy.”

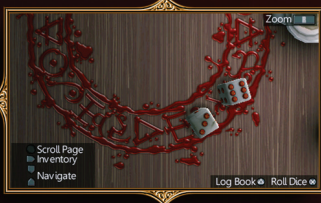
PSPminis - 8.5/10



“It is a perfect introduction to the world of Fighting Fantasy...

Laughing Jackal haven't disappointed.”

thedigitalfix - 8/10



Available on PlayStation Network for PS3 & PSP



roleplaying rogue

12

Queen of Shades

26

Seas of Blood

66

OTHERS

- 22 INTERVIEW: PAUL STRUTH
- 72 AFF COMPETITION WINNER!: THE CURSE OF MERAKI
- 90 AELOUS RAVEN AND THE WRATH OF THE SEA-WITCH
CHAPTER 3
- 96 EVERYTHING I REALLY NEED TO KNOW I LEARNT FROM
READING FIGHTING FANTASY GAMEBOOKS PART 5

REGULARS

- 04 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR
- 05 OMENS & AUGURIES
- 10 MAMPANG MAILBOX
- 86 CHRONICLE OF HEROES
- 94 OUT OF THE PIT
- 98 THE ARCANE ARCHIVE
- 100 FIGHTING FANTASY COLLECTOR
- 102 FIGHTING DANTASY

Turn to paragraph 1.

INTERVIEW:

He wrote three mini adventures in the pages of *Warlock*, alongside various articles, and penned the gamebook *Midnight Rogue*. **Graeme Davis** is interviewed about his travels in the world of Titan...

MINI ADVENTURE:

by **Paul Struth**

Illustrated by **Alexander Ballingall**

It should have been an adventure like any other; an ancient tomb, a forgotten treasure and a band of brave souls willing to risk their lives in pursuit of fame and fortune. Now, a day after your successful return to Kharé, the notorious cityport of traps, two of your fellow adventurers lie dead – will YOU be the next victim of the curse?

THE FACT OF FICTION:

Setting sail upon the Inland Sea in search of treasure of one kind or another in **Andrew Chapman's** pirate tale...

STAFF

EDITOR

ALEXANDER BALLINGALL
editor@fightingfantazine.co.uk
www.twitter.com/gallicus

NEWS EDITOR

GUILLERMO PAREDES

OUT OF THE PIT EDITOR

ANDREW WRIGHT

ADVENTURE EDITOR

DEMIAN KATZ

FRONT COVER ARTWORK

N. GINGERBOOM

BACK COVER ARTWORK

MICHAEL WOLMARANS

With thanks to: Graham Bottley, Ross Brierley, Graeme Davis, Jamie Fry, Henry Lord, Neil Rennison, Bob Sterling, and Paul Struth. "The little creature asks you if you have come to see his master."



Ding ding! Round Seven.

Hi all, we're back for a further outing of *Fighting Fantasy*-related mayhem. As you may have noticed, the magazine has undergone a small face-lift to keep things fresh and interesting. Don't worry though, as the good stuff is still there on the pages in between! At the same time, the magazine has finally obtained a proper web address (see the guff at the bottom of the page for the URL) to help give it a better presence on the internet. And if you are already plugged into twitter, you can get all the latest news about the magazine from the feed listed on the previous page.

So what do we have in store for you this issue? We've two interviews with writers at two ends of the *Fighting Fantasy* spectrum: professional writer Graeme Davis and amateur Paul Struth both look back at writing for the range. Winner of the *Warlock* magazine competition back in 1984, Paul Struth also pens the mini adventure featured in this issue, the *Queen of Shades*. Speaking of competitions, we have the winner of the *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* competition run last issue in the form of Stuart Lloyd's *The Curse of Meraki*. Judge for the competition, *AFF* writer Graham Bottley, gives his thoughts on the entries for the competition and will return in the next issue where he contributes a new multi-player mini adventure, so keep your eyes peeled for that.

The usual suspects are all here, such as "The Fact of Fiction" (this issue sees Warren McGuire tackle *Seas of Blood*), Ian Brocklehurst's *Aelous Raven* adventure, and Ed Jolley's list of pithy morals.

"Out of the Pit" makes a welcome return, but don't forget to get in touch with Andrew Wright about material for future instalments! This issue also sees the arrival of the letters page, which is something I hope will become an ongoing feature of the magazine as I feel it allows a place for fans to comment on things that wouldn't naturally stretch to being made into an article. The letters section is open to letters about anything to do with *Fighting Fantasy*, this very magazine (your feedback is always appreciated), and anything to do with gamebooks (yes, you can mention *Lone Wolf* et al. in the letters pages!).

Finally, a big congratulations to Jamie Fry (writer of our "Fighting Fantasy Collector" column who has become the new *Warlock* (editor) of the official *Fighting Fantasy* website. Long may his STAMINA never fail! In light of that, we will be featuring an interview with Jamie next issue as he sets out what he hopes to achieve with the site in the future, especially with the thirtieth anniversary of the *Fighting Fantasy* series arriving next year.

Here's to 2012!

Alex

Fighting Fantazine – The Fighting Fantasy Fan Magazine • Issue 7. Published September 2011.
Published three to four times a year.

WEBSITE: <http://www.fightingfantazine.co.uk/>

BLOG: <http://fightingfantazine.blogspot.com/>

CONTRIBUTIONS: Contributions to the fanzine in the form of letters, articles, reviews, fanfiction, artwork, comics et cetera are welcomed and readily invited.

NEXT DEADLINE: **December 1st 2011**

All *Fighting Fantasy* material is © Steve Jackson, Ian Livingstone, Wizard Books 2011. All other material is © **Fighting Fantazine – The Fighting Fantasy Fan Magazine** and the individual writers and artists unless otherwise indicated. **Fighting Fantazine – The Fighting Fantasy Fan Magazine** is a not-for-profit fanzine and no attempt has been made to supersede the copyrights held by Wizard Books, Steve Jackson, Ian Livingstone or any other persons or organisations. No similarity between any of the fictional names, characters persons and/or institutions herein with those of any living or dead persons or institutions is intended and any such similarity is purely coincidental. The views expressed in this fan publication (**Fighting Fantazine – The Fighting Fantasy Fan Magazine**) are those of the credited writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor. Nothing may be reproduced by any means in whole or part without written permission of the publishers. All letters sent to this fanzine will be considered for publication, but the publishers cannot be held responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs or artwork. Where possible, permission from the artists has been sought for the reproduction of *Fighting Fantasy* art. If you have any queries about this, please contact the Editor. © 2011

FIGHTING FANTASY FACELIFT

The official *Fighting Fantasy* website (www.fightingfantasy.com) is now under new administration as of late August. We wish the new editor, Jamie Fry (of fightingfantasycollector.co.uk fame) the best of luck in this new era.



Jamie has agreed to a more indepth interview for the next issue, but was also willing to answer a few quick questions now as he

gets to grips with the site. With a short term plan to make minor amendments to the site, Jamie hopes that in the longer term that it will become a "one stop shop for all fans young and old". Small changes to the site have already taken place and Jamie has now administrator

control of the Facebook page "Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks" and the Twitter account @fightingfantasy.

He is also keen for fans to know that "Steve and Ian are very much involved and completely behind me in taking the site to another level, they want to keep the brand alive." Jamie's own site will remain as it is, "but I have been asked to integrate the content in some way with the official site including the [collector's] guide." He also hinted that plans were being discussed for ways to celebrate *Fighting Fantasy* turning thirty next year in August.

OTHER FF DEVELOPEMENTS

Elsewhere in the world of *Fighting Fantasy*, the PlayStation version of *Talisman of Death* has finally seen the light of day. According to Laughing Jackal, the developer studio, the PlayStation version includes both the classic and new systems for character creation, combat and luck rolls. Laughing Jackal has also announced a revamped version of *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* for the same platform. Ross Brierley of Laughing Jackal will be interviewed next issue.

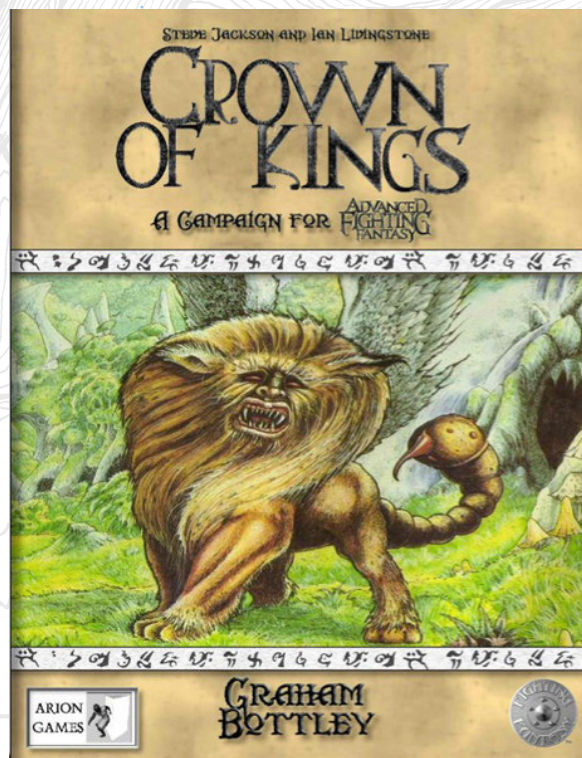
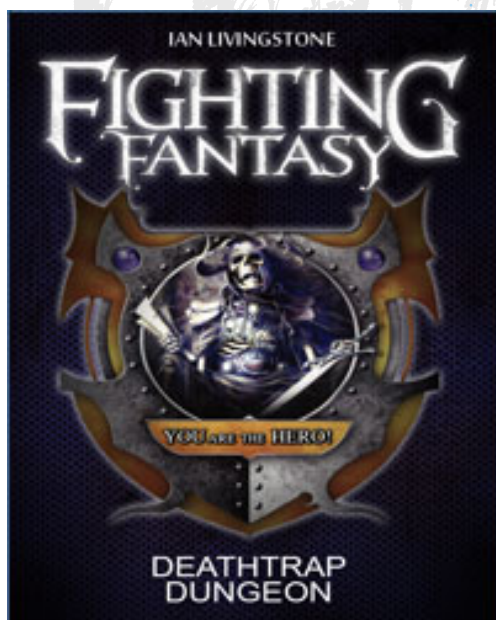
In addition to the film based on the *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook *House of Hell*, a different producer has acquired the rights to make a film based on *Deathtrap Dungeon*. Details are scarce at this time, but we will keep you posted.

Having released *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*, *The Citadel of Chaos*, and *Deathtrap Dungeon* for the Kindle,

Worldweaver has announced its plans to release *City of Thieves*, *House of Hell* and *Creature of Havoc* for the same platform in 2012. Meanwhile, no word on whether these releases will become available outside the US, but Chris Sterling of Worldweaver will be interviewed next issue.

Developments also abound with Arion Games and their new version of *Advanced*

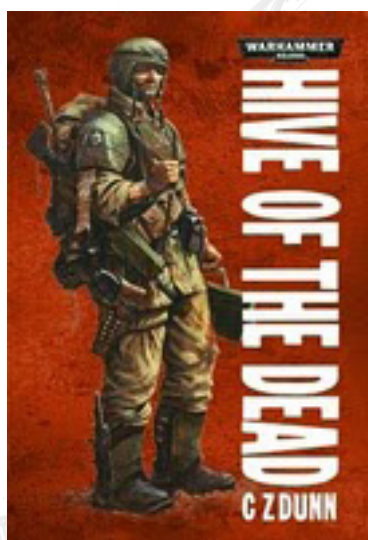
Fighting Fantasy. A campaign version of the *Sorcery!* series (titled *Crown of Kings*) is due for release and sequels to *Titan – The Fighting Fantasy World* and *Out of the Pit* are in the works. Other plans are currently under wraps as the series heads towards its anniversary year.



FABLED LANDS

The first supplement for the *Fabled Lands* RPG, *Sokara: the War-Torn Kingdom*, is now available. The book retails for 19.99 USD. Greywood Publishing has also released a storytelling card game based on the world of the *Fabled Lands* gamebooks, called *Tales of the Fabled Lands Card Game*. Visit www.greywoodpublishing.com/totfl.html for more info.

Sadly, the re-release of the original *Fabled Lands* gamebooks in paper format has come to a halt, but apparently the series has done reasonably well in its iApp incarnation. The second book, *Cities of Gold and Glory* is now available, and the third book *Over the Blood-Dark Sea* will be available in the fourth quarter of 2012.

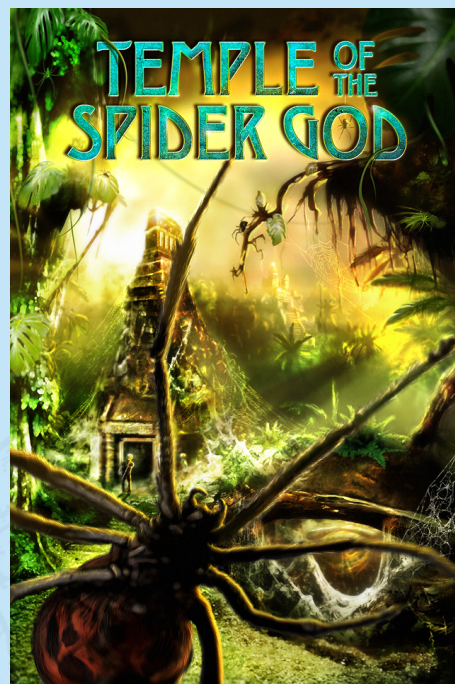


WARHAMMER

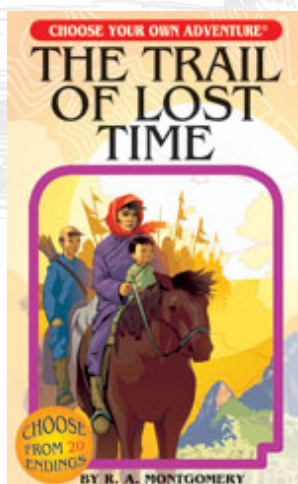
One of the biggest news of the year is the release of the first ever Warhammer 40,000 official gamebook. *Hive of the Dead* (by C. Dunn) is available via print-on-demand for 19.99 USD at The Black Library website (www.blacklibrary.com/Warhammer-40000/hive-of-the-dead.html). The publishers have announced it is the first in a planned series. The September Games Day reveal that Jonathan Green is penning a book for this new series, currently going by the title *Herald of Oblivion*.

GAMEBOOK ADVENTURES

One of the most exciting news in the realm of electronic gamebooks is the upcoming release of a *Gamebook Adventures* title by *Fighting Fantasy* author Jonathan Green for the iPhone/iPad platform. The book, titled *Temple of the Spider God*, should be available in August for 4.99 USD, should be available at the end of September. Tin Man Games has also hinted at future gamebook releases by this author. Also in the works is a sequel to the first title, *An Assassin in Orlandes*, written again by Simon Osborne. Visit tinmangames.co.au for updates.

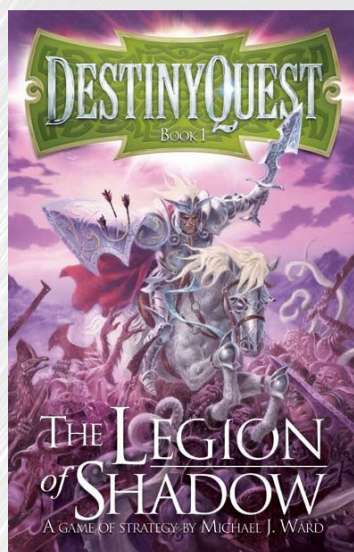


CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE



October 2011 will see, for the first time, a batch of brand-new *Choose Your Own Adventures* releases by different authors, rather than the occasional new book we used to get every now and then. The new releases will be: *Search for the Black Rhino* by Allison Gilligan; *The Curse of the Pirate Mist* by Doug Wilhelm and *The Trail of Lost Time* by R.A. Montgomery. Each of them will retail for 6.99 USD.

DESTINYQUEST

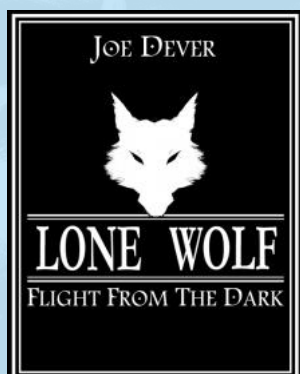


Thankfully, this series of gamebooks has also done well. Having changed publishers, the first book of the series, *The Legion of Shadow*, will be republished in May 2012. A second book, *The Heart of Fire*, will appear in November of that year. Each book will retail for 14.99 GBP. Visit www.destiny-quest.com for updates.

LONE WOLF

While Mongoose's re-releases of the *Lone Wolf* gamebooks continue to move at a snail's pace (Book #17, *The Deathlord of Ixia*, has been listed for pre-order for months), Greywood Publishing has announced it has obtained a licence to publish a *Lone Wolf* board game. Not much information is available but apparently it will be some sort of wargame. Oh, and I almost forgot to mention the artwork will be done by Gary Chalk. The web page for the game is www.greywoodpublishing.com/lwwg.html

Meanwhile, Worldweaver, the people who brought us *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* for the Kindle, have also released a Kindle version of the first *Lone Wolf* book, *Flight from the Dark*. According to our sources, further titles in the series should become available at two month intervals.



The WORST-CASE SCENARIO ULTIMATE ADVENTURE



MARS

YOU DECIDE HOW TO SURVIVE!

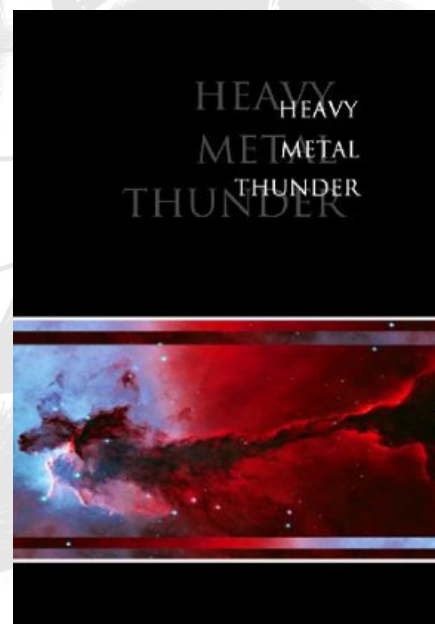
By Hena Khan and David Borgenicht
with Robert Zubrin
Illustrated by Vance Labett

OTHER RELEASES

The *Worst Case Scenario* series continues with a book titled *Mars*. It's available in hardcover and Kindle formats for 9.99 USD. A third title, *Amazon*, is scheduled for June 2012.

Another new series is *Heavy Metal Thunder* by Kyle B. Stiff. A science-fiction aimed at adults, this series is diceless, but it uses a game system and character creation. The first book, also titled *Heavy Metal Thunder*, is available on the Kindle for 2.99 USD.

The *Twisted Journeys* interactive graphic novel series continues to be a success. Two new titles are being announced for January 2012: *The Fifth Musketeer* and *Peril at Summerland Park*. In paperback format, each one retails for 7.95 USD.

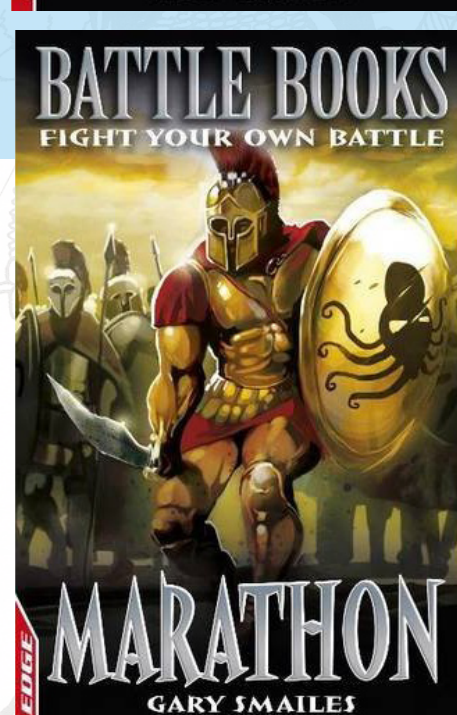
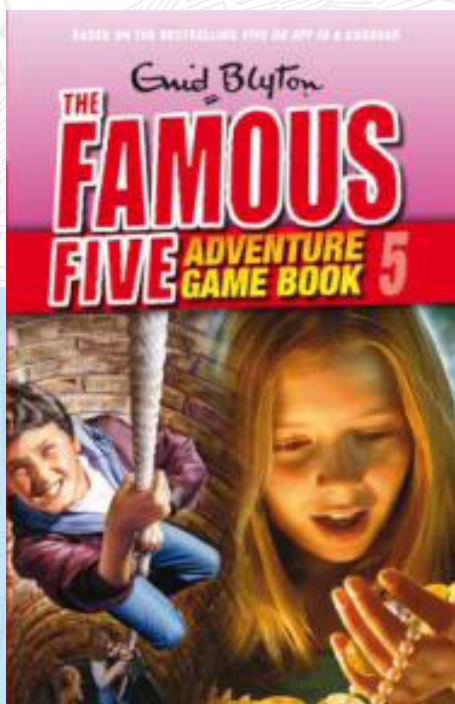


FAMOUS FIVE ADVENTURE GAMEBOOKS

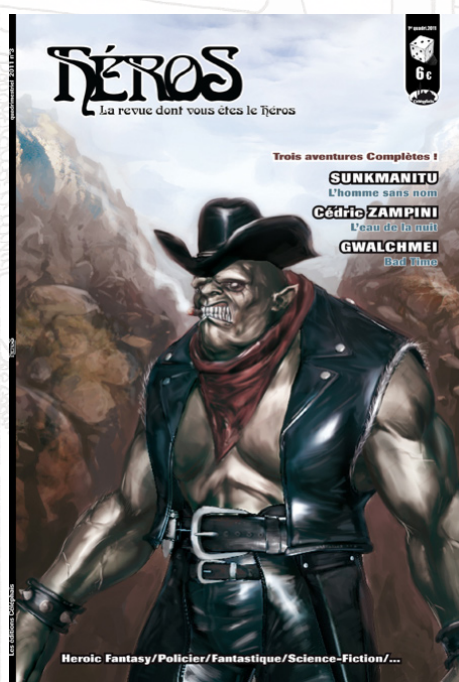
Two more books from the *Famous Five Adventure Game Books* series are now available. They are *Catch the Thief* (based on *Five Go Off in a Caravan*) and *Save the Island* (based on *Five on Kirrin Island Again*). Each one goes for 4.99 GBP. Kindle versions are available.

BATTLE BOOKS

A new series of military history gamebooks has been released. The series is called *Edge: Battle Books*. Each book portrays the reader as a general in a historical battle. Four titles are already out: *Hastings* (based on the last successful invasion of England in 1066), *Marathon* (based on the wars between Ancient Greece and Persia), and finally *Arnhem* and *Iwo Jima*, based on the respective World War II battles. Each book retails for 5.99 GBP. Kindle versions are available.



OTHER LANGUAGES



three adventures in each issue. They are pricey, though. Each issue costs 20 EUR. You can purchase new issues at www.revueheros.fr and back issues at www.legrimoire.net/store/.

The *Tu decides la aventura* Spanish-language gamebook series is also doing quite well. The fifteenth title, *Castillo Fantasma* (Ghost Castle) is already out. The book retails for 9.95 EUR. Visit www.editorialhidra.com for more info.



If you can read French, I suggest you check out *Revue Héros*. This magazine, now in its third installment, contains

FF

ADVANCED FIGHTING FANTASY IS BACK...



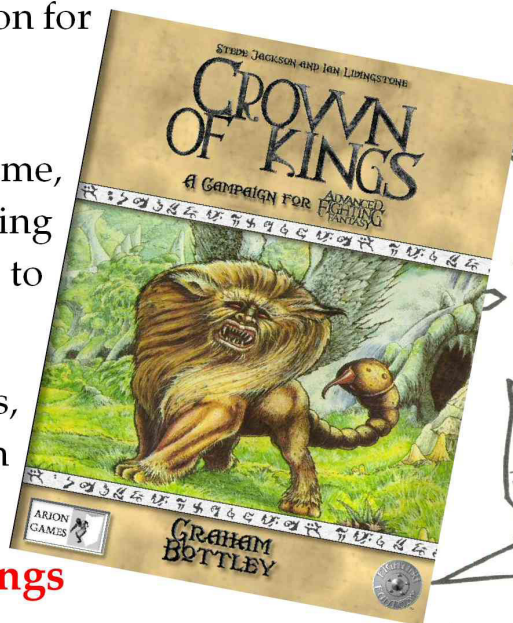
A classic from the classic age of Roleplaying games: Advanced Fighting Fantasy lives again.

Returning from oblivion like Zagor the Warlock, the brand new core book provides a complete set of rules to play in the world of Fighting Fantasy, backed up by the re-release of Titan and Out of the Pit, providing enough monsters and information for

years of adventuring!

Perfect for original fans of the game, experienced roleplayers new to Fighting Fantasy and is ideal for those new to roleplaying.

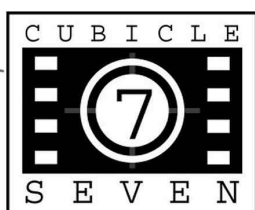
Available from all good Game Stores, bookshops, online retailers and direct from Cubicle 7.



Crown of Kings

COMING SOON

www.cubicle7.co.uk



FF mampang mailbox

Dear *Fighting Fantazine* Team

I was so happy when I discovered this magazine. Having missed out on the original runs of *Warlock* this was a great way for me to connect with FF fans all over the world. I have been a fan for two decades now. I don't think there's any publication of fantasy I like more, *Fighting Fantasy* was a huge influence on both my art and writing.

I have some questions that I'd like to put forward, about the books and lore in general.

Ogres and Trolls. What exactly is the physical difference? Are trolls more civilised? What's more dangerous? From what I've seen so far, their scores are pretty even.

I have seen a *Deathtrap Dungeon* card game for sale from time to time, but I can't find much info on it. Any thoughts?

There are two fantasy worlds that I know of in the FF range. Titan and Orb. Apart from the science fiction settings and *House of Hell*, how many other universes are touched upon in the FF range?

Thanks to the FF team for all their hard work.

MICHAEL WOLMARANS EMAIL
(SOUTH AFRICA)

The basic physical differences appear to be height (Ogres are taller) and looks, Ogres being more repulsive in their features than Trolls. Both appear in a variety of guises (Hill Trolls, Sea Ogres etc.), which seems to dictate how intelligent they are. Does anyone have any ideas as to which could be considered the more dangerous of the two? Write in with your thoughts!

Amazingly enough, I own a copy of the *Deathtrap Dungeon* card game. But I've not had the chance to play it, but at first glance it seems similar to the Topp Trumps card games. I'm sure someone can write a letter explaining how wrong I am in that assumption.

As for other worlds, there is Titan City from *Appointment with F.E.A.R.* and *Deadline to Destruction*, the Macrocosmos of *Spectral Stalkers*, Amarillia of *Legend of Zagor* and

the *Zagor Chronicles* novels, and the Flat Lands of Ruth Pracy's three mini adventures (two in the magazine *Warlock* and one in the magazine *Proteus*).

An open letter on the future of *Fighting Fantasy*.

First let me begin by recognizing the work of Alex and the other contributors to the *Fighting Fantazine* publication. Without their collective efforts the resurgence in FF awareness and interest would be greatly diminished.

As a fan who grew up with FF during the heydays in the 1980s and 1990s I enjoy reading each *Fighting Fantazine* issue and reminiscing about the times spent working through each adventure. But I am left wondering if the re-issued book series will gain the same traction with today's youth, who have so many other gaming options to choose from? Wizard has taken some steps to engage new readers by introducing forums and developing FF apps for mobile devices, however unless there is more exposure I fear that this resurgence will be short-lived.

Social media sites, apps for mobile devices, and electronic book formats are one way to increase awareness, and I think these methods should be included in any overall strategy, however I believe there is another approach with the possibility of greater long-term impact.

Early exposure is key, and I believe the most consistent method with the broadest possible exposure is through reading FF books from local schools or public libraries. Through discovering FF for themselves at a library today's youth will have the tactile hands-on experience, including die-rolling and adventure sheets, which make FF such a unique experience.

So if Wizard staff are reading this as well, hopefully they can find a way to allocate a portion of their advertising and marketing budget to donating books or providing bulk purchase discounts to libraries.

If you have any other ideas to

increase FF awareness, write back and let us know.

JEREMY ARNDT EMAIL
(CANADA)

Other ideas to promote *Fighting Fantasy*? I'm unsure how things work in other countries, but in New Zealand there is a series of catalogues, that are sent out to every student in every Primary School (ages 5 through 12) on a roughly quarterly basis, that advertise a huge variety of books aimed at those ages. Things like *Fighting Fantasy* and the *Target Doctor Who* novelizations appeared in those in the 80s and 90s. Could the Wizard editions be promoted in a similar manner in this current age?

Dear Mampang Mailbox,

The recent reboot of *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* got me thinking. The system cleans up a lot in the *Fighting Fantasy* system – it has rules for different situations, a skill and magic system and, most importantly, it replaces random generation with a points buying system. These new rules are not much more complicated than the old rules of just having skill, stamina and luck. What I would like to see is future solo gamebooks using the *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* rules with a selection of skills and spells from the rulebook and a points buy system for the starting character so that they could get the correct stats in order to survive the book based on the kinds of challenges they have. For example, in *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*, the hero has to fight a SKILL 10 opponent to get the treasure at the end, so they could have a starting SKILL of 8 and then buy some more SKILL points. It would be a good start in reducing the unfairness of the solo books. Of course, everyone would go for the maximum SKILL to start with but then they will have more fun as their success will depend on their choices rather than a random die roll. They may even start with a lower SKILL if they fancy a challenge. Also, players of solo books should be given the option of willingly failing tests against their stats, so that they

E-mail: editor@fightingfantazine.co.uk (marked "Mampang Mailbox" in the subject line), or visit the **Fighting Fantazine** Facebook page at www.facebook.com

YOUR THOUGHTS ON FIGHTING FANTASY, THE MAGAZINE, AND THE MULTIVERSE OF GAMEBOOKS

can get around having to fail a test to succeed.

Regards,

STUART LLOYD EMAIL
(ENGLAND)

Fighting Fantasy gamebooks under AFF rules? Half the attraction of the gamebooks for myself was the ease and simplicity of the game system! What does everyone else think, does Stuart's suggestion have any merit?

Dear *Fantazine*,

I'm sure I'm not alone in thinking that the *Fighting Fantazine* is one of the best things to appear in the world of *Fighting Fantasy*. It's great to see such a committed body of contributors carrying the torch for the series. I wonder, though, what the future holds for *Fighting Fantasy*.

Maybe it's just me, but I can't help thinking that things don't look as rosy as they did a few years ago. The last new FF book was *Night of the Necromancer*, published over a year ago in April 2010, and only four of the original FF series have been reprinted in 2011. I know that *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* and *The Citadel of Chaos* have been released on Kindle in the US, and that *Out of the Pit*, *Titan*, and *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* have been published by Arion Games, but other than a reworking of the *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* system, none of this is new material.

And the online community seems a bit muted these days too (other than *Fighting Fantazine* of course!) – for example, the Official Fighting Fantasy website is barely maintained, and

the Yahoo! discussion groups, once the epicentre of *Fighting Fantasy* on the web, are pretty quiet too. So is *Fighting Fantasy* entering another mid-90s style decline? I hope not. I'd be interested to know what the rest of you think and, indeed, what those who own the rights to *Fighting Fantasy* are thinking.

WARREN MCGUIRE EMAIL
(ENGLAND)

The range does have a feeling of being trapped in ever decreasing circles, with each iteration being a more faded copy of the previous version. Send us a letter with your predictions for the future of the *Fighting Fantasy* series!

FF

Fighting Fantasy's Jonathan Green now writing for GA!

GAMEBOOK ADVENTURES

iPhone, iPod Touch & iPad
coming soon to Kindle & Android

www.gamebookadventures.com

Available on the App Store

Graeme Davis was a fairly prolific contributor to both White Dwarf and Warlock magazines and wrote the popular gamebook Midnight Rogue. Now based in the USA as a freelance game designer, Graeme was happy to be questioned by Fighting Fantazine.

ROLLING UP A CHARACTER

What can you share about your background and childhood?

I was born in 1958 at West Middlesex Hospital in Isleworth. In the 60s and 70s, the hospital was used for the exteriors in the medical *Carry On* films, though I'm glad to say I managed to avoid the attentions of Messrs. Williams, Hawtrey, and the rest. I lived in Bedfont until

writer at the age of about six. English composition was my favourite thing to do at school, and if there had been an A-level available in English language back then, I would have taken it. My one regret is the youthful arrogance with which I disdained English Lit (though I have to say, the First World War poets who seemed to dominate my set book list for O-level were not inspiring company). It took me years to realize that my own writing could have been improved by studying the works of the masters.

How did you become interested in RPGs?

I had been in a couple of school plays, and after leaving I joined the Bracknell Drama Club. ICL had a big

the regular roster.

Which is your favourite and do you still indulge?

I'd have to say *Call of Cthulhu*. Advanced *Dungeons & Dragons* has a purity to it (and a simplicity, compared with more recent editions) that I still like, but the kind of adventures *Call of Cthulhu* promoted, with tense investigations and combat almost never being the best option, had a real appeal. It certainly influenced my work on *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*. I still write material for tabletop role-playing games, including *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* and Rogue Games' *Colonial Gothic* (think of the American Revolution as imagined by H. P. Lovecraft and Dan

roleplaying rogue

the age of seven, when the family moved to Virginia Water. I went to Strode's School from 1969-1976; in my last year it went from an all-boys' grammar school (complete with robed masters and compulsory Latin, it was like something out of *Goodbye, Mister Chips*) to a mixed 6th form college, which was a bit of a shock and wrought havoc with my A-level results. I worked at the Midland Bank (since absorbed by HSBC) from 1976-1979, saving money and taking another A-level course by correspondence. I was a fairly typical youth of those days, if a little bookish and shy. My mind was filled mostly with thoughts of girls, beer, and progressive rock, wherever quadratic equations and ablative absolutes left room.

Was writing something you were interested in at school?

Always. I loved stories as a child, beginning with the complete works of Enid Blyton and rapidly moving on to whatever I could get my hands on. I was writing stories almost as soon as I could form the letters, and declared my intention of becoming a

facility there (now Fujitsu-Siemens) and some ICL folks at the drama club started talking about a game that was part wargame and part improvised theatre. Unable to reconcile the two in my mind, I went along to see for myself, and played my first game of *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1978. I kept on playing through my college years, adding *Bushido* and *Call of Cthulhu* to

Brown), but alas, I haven't had the opportunity to play in some time.

Before writing for Warlock, were you aware of the Fighting Fantasy series. If so, what had been your opinion of them and has that opinion changed since?

It was hard not to be aware of *Fighting Fantasy* back in the early 80s. The books were everywhere. Because they were clearly aimed at a younger readership than college-age hardcore roleplayers, I did read a few disparaging remarks about them, but most of the stories I read were good enough and I was intrigued by the process of creating this kind of interactive fiction.

My opinion of gamebooks as a whole and *Fighting Fantasy* in particular has not changed over the years. Of course, video games have taken a toll on the market for gamebooks, but the idea is still sound and intriguing.

Did you ever perceive Fighting Fantasy as simply a "junior" version of fantasy gaming that people were supposed to drop once they'd taken





up “proper” gaming like *Dungeons & Dragons*?

Never. It was a more portable form of fantasy gaming that people could take with them wherever they went, and for which they didn’t need to assemble a group of friends. While I thought it might interest a lot of new people in tabletop fantasy gaming, I never saw it as something to be grown out of once one had tasted the “real thing”. That would be like expecting people not to play solitaire on their phone in an idle moment, just because they had started playing an MMO game on their PC or console.

You studied archaeology at University, which suggests where the idea for the barrow in *The Ring of Seven Terrors* comes from. Do you think that this study has had an effect on your later writing and game designing?

Definitely. I did most of my really serious gaming during my college years, just as I was learning about archaeology. Most of my gaming group were physicists, so I had an advantage when I GMed *Dungeons & Dragons*, since I knew what a medieval level of technology could and could not achieve. Had I been running *Traveller*, there’s no telling what they might have talked me into allowing. Pistols that fire point singularities? The mind reels.

While I was at college, I started to design an RPG called *Fianna*, based on heroic Irish myths such as The Tain. It never got further than a couple of playtest sessions, but ever since the first time I played *Bushido* I was interested in using roleplaying to explore historical cultures and their myths. To date, I’ve written two editions each of *GURPS Vikings* and *GURPS Middle Ages*, plus an *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* supplement on the Iron Age Celts, a d20 sourcebook on Rome, and various *Colonial Gothic* publications on the Thirteen Colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries.

What led you to become a contributor to *White Dwarf*?

Well, as I said before, I’d wanted to be a writer since I was six. It’s almost as though I can’t not write. Bits for the school magazine, sketches for the university revue group, and I usually had the handwritten start of a (usually quite bad) novel somewhere. I was an avid reader of *White Dwarf* and whatever other gaming magazines I could get my hands on, and some time around 1980 editor Jamie Thomson announced the intention of taking the magazine from bimonthly to monthly and put out an appeal for new contributors. That was a red rag to a bull where I was concerned. I bombarded him with articles – usually two a month – until my first piece was published in 1982. When the cheque arrived, onlookers reported a shaft of light from the heavens shining down on me to the strains of a heavenly choir. I did what undergraduate students do with cheques – converted it into beer with all dispatch – and started work on the next batch of articles right away.

**WRITING FOR WARLOCK —
ARTICLES AND MINI
ADVENTURES**

How did you end up writing for *Warlock* magazine in 1985?

I had been writing for *White Dwarf* since 1982, and as my college years drew to a close I decided to chance

it and see if I could make a living out of writing for games. I had seen the rise of *Fighting Fantasy* and its various imitators, and gamebooks in general were wildly popular at the time – almost a *Harry Potter* level of popularity. I had co-written an analysis of the gamebook phenomenon for TSR UK’s *Imagine* magazine along with their regular book reviewer Colin Greenland, and did a semi-regular gamebook spot on BBC Radio Newcastle’s book programme; my first writing contract was to create two six-part gamebook series for Oxford University Press. Titled *Quest Books* (*Kern the Strong* and *Oss the Quick*), they were aimed at teenagers with reading difficulties, using the gamebook format and adventure content to encourage reading.

So when *Warlock* magazine started, it was natural that I’d pitch them some ideas. There were other gamebook magazines around at the time (I remember one called *Proteus*, and a gamebook-style comic put out under the 2000AD banner), but *Warlock* is the one that responded to my pitches.

You wrote several articles in *Warlock* that helped readers expand on and build their own multi-player adventures for the *Fighting Fantasy* – *The Role-playing Game* system. Would you have liked to have penned your own book akin to *The Riddling Reaver*?

Yes, very much. However, by the time it came out I was working full-time on *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*. Games Workshop had taken over *Warlock* from Puffin, and in fact editor Marc Gascoigne sat only a few desks away from me, so I still wrote the occasional article, but my main efforts by that time were focused on *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* and *The Enemy Within* campaign. A little later I got to write my own gamebook – *Midnight Rogue* – but I always watched the progress of *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* with interest and hoped for opportunities to write multi-player material.

What can you tell us about the commissioning and writing of *The Ring of Seven Terrors*?

It wasn't commissioned as such – I just submitted it and it was accepted. I had the idea while contemplating the Seven Deadly Sins. I was toying with the idea of a *Doctor Phibes*-style adventure for *Call of Cthulhu*, involving a series of themed murders. The film *Se7en* covered that some years later, of course. Somehow, my mind wandered from sins to fears, and the idea was born. I can't remember quite how I decided to write it for *Fighting Fantasy*, but I liked the simplicity of the system and it may have been out of a desire to avoid having game mechanics overshadow the story.

The Ring of Seven Terrors doubled as the "Out of the Pit" column for that issue (*Warlock* #9). Were you aware of this plan before you wrote the adventure?

No – I just wrote it and sent it in like everything else. Of all the publications I was dealing with, only *Imagine* had themes and commissioned articles; with the rest, I just sent manuscripts on speculation. It did seem like an odd choice, though not an indefensible one – perhaps they were short of new monsters for that issue. Having worked on *White Dwarf* during my four years at Games Workshop (GW), I know that material for some parts of a magazine can

occasionally be thin on the ground and regular departments still have to be filled.

In issue #10 of *Warlock* you contributed the solo mini adventure *Rogue Mage*. What led to you writing this and what sort of influences can you see in it?

I knew that I wanted to write a full-sized *Fighting Fantasy* book, and this was a tryout. I wanted to figure out the process for myself, and show the Powers That Be that I could do it. As for influences, I had noticed that Ian and Steve had different styles. Steve was usually stretching the boundaries of the rules system (as he did with *Sorcery!* and by writing a lot outside of the fantasy genre), while Ian seemed more interested in crafting mind-bending dungeons with interesting encounters. I was already in touch with Steve through my early contributions to *Warlock* and *White Dwarf*, and on pretty good terms. Ian I knew less well, and I decided to put my effort into impressing him with a dungeon. I'm not sure how well the finished article stood up against my intentions, but Marc Gascoigne thought it was good enough to publish in *Warlock*.

Rogue Mage was presented with both *Fighting Fantasy* and *Dungeons & Dragons* rules, something that only happened once more in the following issue. Was this a decision on your part and do you think it works well for both systems?

I'm embarrassed to say I don't remember. I had a big bee in my bonnet about multi-system adventures in those days, so it's definitely the sort of thing I would have done back then. I had the idea that the more systems were covered, the wider the appeal of the adventure

Right: A selection of gaming magazines that Graeme has written for.

selected bibliography

FIGHTING FANTASY

Gamebook

Midnight Rogue (1987)

Mini Adventures

Battle of Grey Rock (*Warlock* #11, 1986)

Rogue Mage (*Warlock* #10, 1986)

The Ring of Seven Terrors (*Warlock* #9, 1986)

Articles

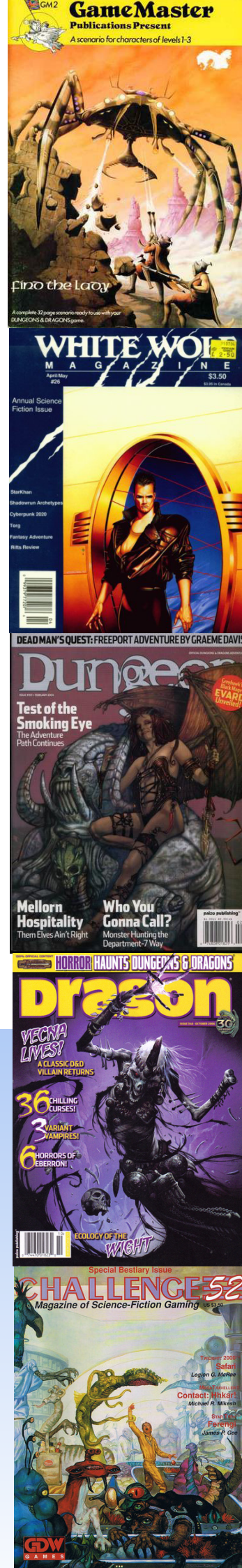
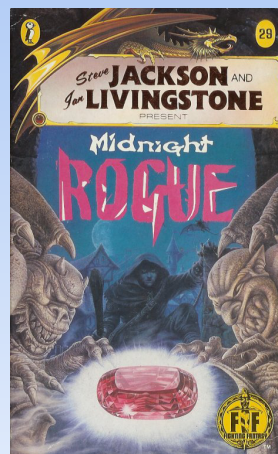
"Into the Unknown" (*Warlock* #12, 1986)

"More Monster Conversions" (*Warlock* #10)

"Monster Conversions" (*Warlock* #9)

"Magical Items" (*Warlock* #9)

"The Seasoned Adventurer" (*Warlock* #4, 1985)





would be, and one memorable piece I sent to *Imagine* magazine covered no less than twenty systems. Needless to say, it was a very short adventure with pages and pages of monster stats, and quite rightly it was never published.

What led to *Rogue Mage* being selected to appear in the 1992 10th Anniversary Yearbook?

I'm the wrong person to ask. All I know is that Marc told me one day that it was happening.

How well do you think *Rogue Mage* works as an adventure looking back at it now?

Oof! Too long ago, I'm afraid. I haven't owned a copy for years, since most of my game collection had to go during a lean patch in the 90s. From what I remember of it, the dungeon part wasn't nearly as clever as I had intended, although the theme of a wizard creating mutant monsters held up reasonably well.

Your final mini adventure contribution to *Warlock* was the game *Battle of Grey Rock* in issue #12. This looks like a deliberate

attempt to create the beginnings of a *Fighting Fantasy* tabletop game. Was it designed as a possible game prototype or was it merely meant to be a stepping stone to guide people towards something like *Warhammer*?

I didn't have such grand ambitions. GW was starting to experiment with plastic miniatures about then, and I thought a skirmish game would be a fun thing to do with the *Fighting Fantasy* rules, and might help shift a few boxes. The *Fighting Fantasy* plastic figures included a little rules set in the packaging, but I always thought 25mm was a better scale. And if it did bring a few more people to *Warhammer*, then so much the better.

EXPANDING FRONTIERS —
WRITING FOR GAMES WORKSHOP

In 1986 you joined Games Workshop for a four year stint. What was your primary job there?

My main job was to develop *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*. When I arrived in May 1986, it existed as three separate piles of notes – typed and handwritten – from *Warhammer* designers Rick Priestley and Richard Halliwell and GW boss Bryan Ansell. There was also a huge and tangled mass of setting information in various sources including first and second edition *Warhammer* products, back issues of *The Citadel Journal* and *The Citadel Compendium*, and the text on the backs of miniatures boxes. My job was to pull this

all together and turn it into a tabletop roleplaying game that would, in Bryan's words, "stand toe to toe with *D&D*." After a few months, I was joined by Jim Bambra and Phil Gallagher, both formerly from TSR UK, who did sterling work in helping me finish up the rulebook and put together *The Enemy Within* campaign. When I was not working on *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* products, I wrote and edited for any product that needed it, pounded out ad copy for *White Dwarf* (on one memorable occasion while a taxi waited outside to take the ad – a last-minute page replacement – to the printers), reduced the *White Dwarf* submissions pile from over 6 feet to less than one, and made sure the studio didn't run out of tea and coffee supplies. For the last year I was in the comparative calm of Flame Publications along with editor Mike Brunton and artist Tony Ackland, writing and / or editing *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* material at the rate of one 96-128 page book and 8 pages for *White Dwarf* each month.

What do you think makes a great RPG as opposed to an okay or mediocre one?

An RPG is the sum of its parts, and to make a great RPG each individual element must be great: a compelling setting, smooth and easy-to-use mechanics with at least one unique and brilliant feature to set the system apart, strong supporting products published at regular intervals (not too many, not too few), and, more than

OTHER GAMEBOOKS

Quest Game Books

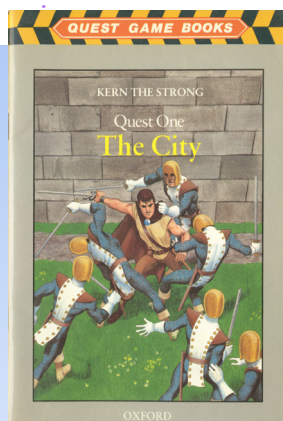
(Oxford University Press)
Oss the Quick (1988)
Kern the Strong (1987)

NOVEL

Blood and Honor
(2006, Wizards of the Coast)

SHORT STORY

Against the Air Pirates (2011, Stone Skin Press, in *The New Hero*)



GAMES WORKSHOP MATERIAL

RPGs

Castle Drachenfels (1992, co-written with Carl Sargent)
Death's Dark Shadow (1991, co-written with Carl Sargent)
Warhammer Companion (1990, co-written with Thomas Boyd, Mike Brunton, Ken Cliffe, Saul Dooley, Neal Harvey, Carl Sargent, Andy Warwick, Flame Publications)
Death Rock (1990, co-written with Basil Barrett and Simon Forrest)
Lichemaster (1990, co-written with Carl Sargent)
Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay – Character Pack (2nd Edition) (1990)
Blood in Darkness (1990, co-written with Basil Barrett and Simon Forrest)
Dwarf Wars (1990, co-written with Simon Forrest and Brad Freeman)
Fire in the Mountains (1990, co-written with Basil Barrett,

ever these days, excellent marketing to put it in front of the audience. After all, if no one knows about a game it doesn't matter how great it is.

What about gamebooks? Do you think there are some simple guidelines as to what makes one of those work well?

Keep the "game" and the "book" parts in balance. Create a good story with meaningful decision points, serious consequences to reader choices, and breathtaking plot twists. Create (or use) a game system that is both simple enough to explain in a page or less and powerful enough to make the gameplay broader than just chip, chip, chip at the enemy's hit points till it falls over, then go on to the next one.

And if at all possible, ensure that the book is all the reader needs. Apart from series like *Choose Your Own Adventure* which were interactive fiction with no game elements, the majority of gamebooks needed dice and a pencil. *Sorcery!* got over the dice requirement by printing random dice rolls on the pages so the reader could flip to a result, while another system (I forget which) printed a random number table in the back which the reader could stab with a finger or pencil (eyes closed, of course). In either case, the chances of losing one's place were high, and it's far harder to find your place again in a gamebook

because the paragraphs are not in sequence. I imagine that gamebooks would do very well on e-readers like the Kindle and iPad, since losing your place isn't a problem and random number generators can be built in.

When creating an RPG, game or gamebook, what is the first thing you look for? Do you have a process you follow thereafter?

The first thing I look for is the idea. What is the game about? What is the setting like? Does it evoke a strong atmosphere? What is its potential to tell compelling interactive stories? Once I'm satisfied with that, I turn my attention to the rules system. It has to be easy to understand and use, with a strong base mechanic, plus intuitive subsystems that play to the strengths of the setting. After that, it's just a case of writing the rulebook clearly and concisely and making sure that all the vital information is easy to find and understand.

Looking back now, what do you think of your *White Dwarf* output?

My early articles for *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Call of Cthulhu* led to GW offering me the job which started my career in the games industry, so I look back on them fondly. As a staffer much of my work in *White Dwarf* consisted of promotional articles for various GW products, *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* among them.

Does anything stand out from it as work you'd still be happy with today?

I think I enjoyed the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* work most of all, and if I had to pick a single favourite, it would be the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* adventure *A Rough Night at the Three Feathers*. I remember the moment

Right: A further selection of gaming magazines that Graeme has written for.

- Brad Freeman, and Nigel Stillman)
- Warhammer City of Chaos (1989, Jim Bambra, Paul Cockburn, Phil Gallagher, Sean Masterson, Derrick Norton, and Carl Sargent)
- The Restless Dead (1989, co-written with Jim Bambra, Phil Gallagher, Paul Hargreaves, Derrick Norton, Lewis Page, Carl Sargent, and Philip Wells)
- Empire in Flames (1989, co-written with Jim Bambra, Phil Gallagher, Derrick Norton, and Carl Sargent)
- Warhammer Adventure (1989, co-written with Jim Bambra and Phil Gallagher)
- Realm of Chaos: Slaves to Darkness (1988, co-written with Bryan Ansell and Rick Priestley)
- Death on the Reik (1988, co-written with Jim Bambra and Phil Gallagher)
- Power Behind the Throne (1988, co-written with Phil Gallagher, Derrick Norton, and Carl Sargent)
- Something Rotten in Kislev (1988, co-written with Ken Rolston)
- Warhammer Campaign (1988, co-written with Jim Bambra and Phil Gallagher)
- Shadows Over Bögenhafen (1987, co-written with Jim Bambra and Phil Gallagher)
- Citi-Block (1987, co-written with Richard Halliwell, Alan Merrett, and Carl Sargent)
- Warhammer City (1987, co-written with Jim Bambra, Paul Cockburn, Sean Masterson, and Carl Sargent)
- Green and Pleasant Land (1987, co-written with Andy Bradbury, Richard Edwards, Chris Elliot, Marc Gascoigne, Pete Jeffrey, Brian Lumley, Caroline Rogers, Marcus L. Rowland, Pete



when I was trying to pick a plot for an adventure set in an inn, and suddenly thought “why not do all of them?” I’ve written a couple of other adventures in the same style since, most recently a masked ball in *The Edge of Night* for *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* 3rd edition.

What do you feel was your greatest contribution whilst working at GW?

Definitely *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*. The fact that it still has passionate fans twenty-five years on, despite some long periods in the wilderness, never ceases to surprise and humble me. The work I did along with Jim and Phil pulling the *Warhammer* myths together underpins everything that

has happened since, from the latest *Warhammer* army books to the Black Library fiction to the setting for *Warhammer Online*.

OUT AND ABOUT IN PORT BLACKSAND — MIDNIGHT ROGUE

You finally penned a full length gamebook, *Midnight Rogue*, which was published in late 1987. What can you tell us about pitching that adventure to Puffin?

I put together an outline and a 100-entry sample, and sent it off. Because of my involvement with Games Workshop, I already had an in with Steve and Ian, and that may have helped me with Puffin; I don’t know. Anyway, they accepted the pitch and sent me a contract. It was all pretty smooth as I recall it, no tense negotiations or creative differences.

Did you pitch any ideas for *Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks before/after *Midnight Rogue*? If so, what can you tell us about them?

About 1991 I pitched a desert adventure to Marc Gascoigne. I got as far as sending off the 100 sample entries, but nothing happened beyond that. *Fighting Fantasy* was losing steam a little at that point, and the idea just faded away.

From draft art supplied by artist John Sibbick we can see *Midnight Rogue* had the

working title *Prince of Thieves*. Why did this end up changing and were there any other working titles for this story?

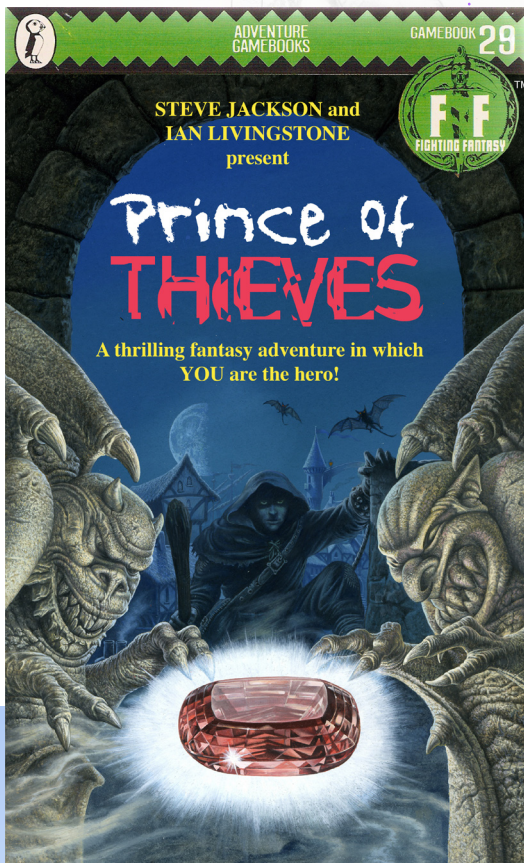
Prince of Thieves was my proposed title. Since it was set in Port Blacksand, from *City of Thieves*, I thought it would be a good title. Ian thought it was a bad title, for the same reasons: he was afraid it would confuse people. So after some thought, the title *Midnight Rogue* came down from Puffin. I still like *Prince of Thieves*, and have never quite forgiven Kevin Costner for using it!

What is your impression of the artwork?

I like it a lot. I’ve always liked John Sibbick’s work; he did the cover for the first edition of *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* along with a lot of other GW covers at that time. I think this was the first time I’d seen him work in black-and-white, and I was equally impressed.

It has been noted that the cover art for *Midnight Rogue* doesn’t match the events of the story with much accuracy. The location of the gem, its colour and other features of the art contradict the text of the adventure. Was this a deliberate decision or simply a matter of things changing as writing progressed after the art had been commissioned?

That was a Puffin decision, and I was presented with a fait accompli. But I don’t have a problem with it. There’s a city, a thief, and a gem, and the



Tamlyn, and Norman Tamlyn)

The Enemy Within (1986, co-written with Jim Bamba and Phil Gallagher)

Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay (1986, co-written with Jim Bamba, Phil Gallagher, Richard Halliwell, and Rick Priestley)

Scenarios

Ironstone Pass (White Dwarf #132, 1990)

Spirit of the Mountain (White Dwarf #99, 1988)

Trilogy of Terror (White Dwarf #97, 1988)

The Beast of Kozamura (White Dwarf #96, 1987)

On the Road (White Dwarf #85, 1987)

The Crude, the Mad and the Rusty (White Dwarf #83, 1986,

co-written with Aly Morrison and Jes Goodwin)

Ghost Jackal Kill (White Dwarf #79, 1986)

Nightmare in Green (White Dwarf #75, 1986)

Haunters of the Dark (White Dwarf #67, 1985)

The City in the Swamp (White Dwarf #37, 1983)

Articles

“Treasures” (White Dwarf #139, 1991)

“Social Level” (White Dwarf #138, 1991)

“The Great Hospice” (White Dwarf #130, 1990)

“The Emperor Luitpold” (White Dwarf #122, 1990)

“Marienburg” (White Dwarf #118~121; 126; 128; 133, 1989~1990, co-written with Anthony Ragan (#118~121 only); co-written with Richard Laing (#128 only))

“Epic Battle Damage System” (White Dwarf #116, 1989, co-written with Jervis Johnson)

“Ork Gargants” (White Dwarf #116, co-written with Jervis Johnson)

gargoyles could just be architectural elements.

Paragraphs 260 and 275 are example of fake paragraphs in *Midnight Rogue* that have nothing to do with the adventure. Why did you feature such paragraphs?

This was a little trick I put in to warn people off cheating. I'm not sure it stands up as a piece of design, but at the time I thought I was being clever.

Paragraph 161 is odd in that the player has the choice of simply giving up the game. What was the point of this paragraph?

I was just trying to build an atmosphere of horror. Obviously no one would give up, but I put that into the player's mind in order to convey something of what the character might be feeling.

The map of Port Blacksand that was printed in *Midnight Rogue* has a series of numbers on it, but no matching key. Can you remember what the numbers were for?

If I remember correctly (and I can't guarantee that I do) the map was taken from another publication, possibly *Titan*, so I presume the numbers refer to a key in that publication. They have no relevance for *Midnight Rogue*.

***Midnight Rogue* is set in Port Blacksand. How much did you rely on *City of Thieves* and *Titan – The Fighting Fantasy World* when writing the adventure?**

A lot. Obviously when you re-use a setting from a previous book, you have to do your homework. I even gave Nicodemus the wizard a small cameo.

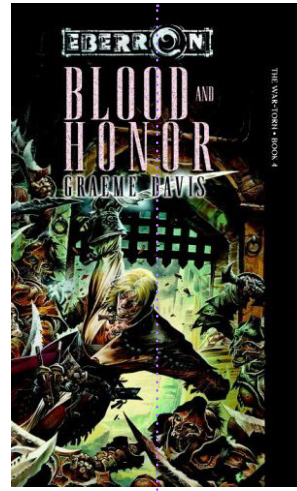
What is your favourite set piece from *Midnight Rogue*?

I think the Basilisk in the darkness is my favourite. I like the idea of something that is worrying because you can't see it, but that becomes much more dangerous when you can.

COMPUTER GAMES AND BEYOND

You published your first novel, *Blood and Honour*, in 2006. This was the fourth and last book in "The War-Torn" quartet of novels set in the *Dungeons & Dragons* world of Eberron. How did you end up coming to write this book?

My friend and sometime colleague Keith Baker tipped me off that Wizards of the Coast's book division had issued an open call for new writers to create stories in his Eberron setting. I submitted an outline and sample chapters, and won. Wizards of the Coast liked my writing but not the story I had come up with; I had written a noir-ish plot, and they wanted more action. In the end, only the title and the main character remained from my original



submission.

How was the novel writing experience different from your gamebook and game writing efforts?

The main difference was that the story was linear rather than interactive. I didn't have to present choices or worry about what would happen if the PCs did the wrong thing. On the other hand, I had to make sure that the main character

and his companions made the choices demanded by the plot for reasons that were sensible and consistent with their personalities.

Was there much communication between you and the other writers of the quartet?

None whatsoever. As it was explained to me, the setting and theme (those who had been affected by the Last War, and what they were doing in the post-war world) was to be the only connection between the four books.

Do you have plans for future novels?

I am working to develop a number of ideas, but I don't yet have anything green-lit. However, I'm hoping to write a great deal more fiction in the future. I do have a short story coming out some time this year. Titled *Against the Air Pirates*, it's a 20s air-pulp adventure set in the Pacific (complete with zeppelin!), which will appear in

"Harlequins" (White Dwarf #105, 1988)

"Portrait of a Highway Warrior: Redd Harves" (White Dwarf #104, 1988)

"Wardancers!" (White Dwarf #96, co-written with Matt Connell)

"OOPS!" (White Dwarf #91, 1987, co-written with Ashley Dennison)

"Onwards and Upwards" (White Dwarf #89, 1987)

"Hand of Destiny" (White Dwarf #88, 1987)

"Wolves of the Sea" (White Dwarf #84, 1986)

"Crime Inc." (White Dwarf #80, 1986)

"A Cast of Thousands" (White Dwarf #77, 1986)

"Tongue Tied" (White Dwarf #70, 1985)

"Poison" (White Dwarf #69, 1985)

"Free the Spirit" (White Dwarf #68, 1985)

"Eye of Newt and Wing of Bat" (White Dwarf #59~63, 1984~1985)

"Beyond the Final Frontier" (White Dwarf #58, 1984)

"Seeing the Light" (White Dwarf #44, 1983)

"Bujutsu" (White Dwarf #43, 1983)

"Treasure Chest" (White Dwarf #32 & 36, 1982)

Graeme Davis is also the author or co-author of almost 200 publications for tabletop games of various kinds, including work for *Dungeons & Dragons*, the d20 System, *Vampire: the Masquerade*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and *GURPS*. His work has been published in more than half a dozen languages. He has also worked on more than 30 video games as a designer and writer, and published articles in several mainstream history magazines. He currently works mainly in the video games industry, and is also the line developer for Rogue Games' *Colonial Gothic* tabletop role-playing game.

Stone Skin Press' inaugural release, *The New Hero*.

What led you to become a writer and designer of computer games?

After I left Games Workshop, I took freelance work wherever I could find it. Ken Rolston (the author of *Something Rotten in Kislev* for *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*) referred me to Interplay who wanted some interactive storylines for an expansion disk (*Castles: The Northern Campaign*), and that was my first contract for a video game project. I quickly came to realize that this industry paid better than tabletop games, and although I kept writing for GW, White Wolf, Steve Jackson Games, and others, video games became an increasingly important part of my business.

What has been the most demanding and/or difficult game you've brought to market and why?

It was a Microsoft game called *Beyond the Limit: Ultimate Climb*, developed by Magnet Interactive Studios in 1995-96. As the design lead for Magnet's edutainment division, I was brought in when the project was already in trouble owing to conflicts between Magnet's development team and the Microsoft team that managed the project. Despite my best efforts, these conflicts continued throughout the development process, and I think they show in the quality of the final product.

Much of your RPG designing comes with a large list of co-designers. Is this simply a reflection of how much work goes into a RPG or for other reasons?

Yes, I think so. *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* was developed by a large team, and so was *Vampire: the Masquerade*. You simply can't have too many pairs of eyes checking systems and stats, picking up rule ambiguities and typos, and so on. In my experience, adventures and sourcebooks are where a single author works best.

Have you ever had an 'eureka' moment when designing a RPG/game? If so, what was it about?

I already mentioned *A Rough Night at the Three Feathers*. I also like the work I did in the Religion and Belief chapter

of the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* 1st edition rulebook, especially the Old Faith and the rules for divine favour and disfavour. I've always had an interest in animal folklore, and the rules for Druidic familiars were something I came up with in response to the frustration I felt about the randomness of animal companions for Druids in *Dungeons & Dragons*. The divine favour rules were also a reaction against a tendency I'd seen in *Dungeons & Dragons* for a character's religion to be simply a guide to role-playing a Cleric or similar character. The gods were strangely passive in most of the *Dungeons & Dragons* material I'd read, whereas in myth and saga they were the main driving force behind a lot of the action.

Away from GW, you have been heavily involved with designing for more recent RPGs like *Vampire: The Masquerade* and *Colonial Gothic*.

How do you think modern RPGs compare to the original 'wave' of RPG material?

Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay came out during a period of change in RPG design. *Call of Cthulhu* had challenged the existing paradigm of dungeon-bashes and hackfests, and there was a growing interest in adventures that required more thought and NPC interaction, where combat could be the least favourable course of action. *Vampire* took this further, and promoted a style of adventure that revolved almost entirely about politics and power struggles within the vampire community. *Colonial Gothic* tries to balance the two. It is heavily influenced by Lovecraft in its conspiracy and horror elements, but also has room for action-heavy adventures on the frontier as the PCs face hostile natives (or, in the case of native characters, hostile colonists) and creatures from local myth and folklore.

How do you think the RPG market (and resulting fandom) has changed since you started writing for it?

Today's RPG market differs from that of the 80s in two important ways. First, roleplaying tried and failed to become a mainstream hobby in the 80s: TSR even published an edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* in Monopoly-style long, flat boxes, to make it more attractive to big-box toy and

game retailers. While there were a number of small publishers, control of the market was increasingly concentrating in the hands of big companies like TSR, GDW, Chaosium, and later White Wolf. Today, while Wizards of the Coast and Paizo dominate, there is a much broader base of small publishers doing it for love as much as for money, enabled by technologies like print on demand and e-publication that have lowered the bar to entry. There are more titles available today than ever.

Set against this is the fact that the market for tabletop roleplaying games has been shrinking ever since the 90s, when video games became the primary medium for fantasy and SF gaming. So we have an increasing number of small companies chasing a declining number of potential customers. The new technologies make it possible to get by on fewer sales, but I can't help feeling that something's got to give. It wouldn't surprise me if we were to see a die-off like the one that happened ten years ago after the explosion of new d20 OGL publishers.

What does the future hold for Graeme Davis?

I'm currently working on multiple titles for *Colonial Gothic* and an exciting project for *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*, as well as consulting on a couple of video game projects. I wish I could be more specific, but I'm bound by non-disclosure agreements. I'm also looking to expand my work in two areas outside the games industry. The first is historical nonfiction: as I said, I've always had an interest in history, and I've published a handful of historical articles in mainstream magazines, mostly for readers aged 8-12. I'd like to do a lot more of that, especially with Dorling Kindersley-style book series. The other is fiction. I'd like to write many more stories and novels, both as game tie-ins and standalone titles. Whenever I have the time these days, I'm researching and putting together proposals for these two markets.

Fighting Fantazine would again like to thank Graeme Davis for taking the time to talk to the magazine.

Fighting Fantasy fan **Paul Struth** was the winner of the 1984 Warlock magazine competition to write a short adventure, one which would be published in that very magazine. Fighting Fantazine has caught up with him over twenty-five years later to tell his story.

OPENING SALVO — A BIT ABOUT THE MAN HIMSELF

What can you tell us about your background and childhood?

I grew up in Cornwall, where I went through the standard curriculum of Interests for Small Boys in the 1970s – Lego, plastic Airfix kits and Subbuteo (a table football game to the uninitiated). My big thing was toy soldiers – I suppose you could say I was an early wargamer. I would build these enormous trench systems across the floor of my bedroom and leave them there for days; my poor Mum would nearly break her neck trying to step over the battlefield to get in. War is hell.

Cottam's modern ghost story *The Waiting Room*. I'm drawn to books that offer realistic settings and believable characters with some weird stuff going on. To explain further: two books that have really impressed me in the last few years are Steven Hall's *The Raw Shark Texts* and *Fangland* by John Marks. The former introduces the wacky idea of 'conceptual fish' swimming in the information stream amidst what one Amazon reviewer called 'a moving depiction of love and grief'. *Fangland* (great book, rubbish title)



WHIRLING DERVISH

Were you a great reader of fantasy fiction?

Not really. The first book to make a big impression on me was *The Lord of the Rings*; I loved the dark bits, especially the scenes with the orcs in Moria and the tower of Minas Morgul. If I hadn't read those, I probably wouldn't have got interested in *Fighting Fantasy*. Apart from Tolkien, the only author to really catch my imagination as a child was Ursula Le Guin; *A Wizard of Earthsea* is still my favourite fantasy book of all time.

If you're not a great fantasy reader, what sort of books do you like to amuse yourself with, and what are you reading now?

As I write, I'm halfway through F.G.

is a modern retelling of the Dracula myth. Marks achieves the impossible; he not only makes you feel you're reading the story for the first time but restores a real sense of horror to the proceedings.

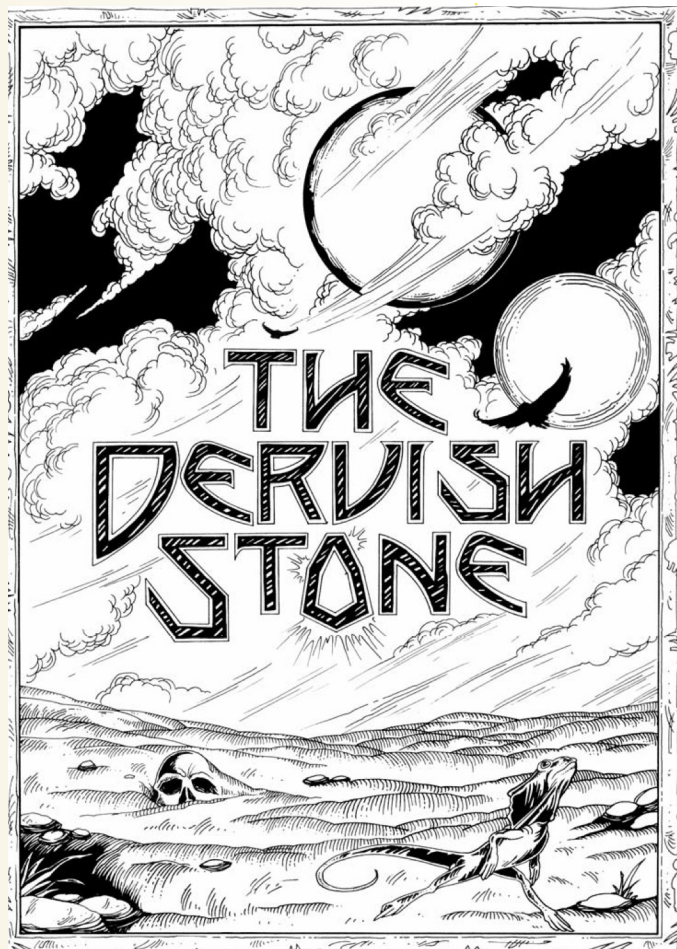
When and how did you become a fan of *Fighting Fantasy*?

I'm old enough to have been part of the original target market. A school friend got *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* as a Christmas present in 1982; I thought it was the best thing ever and rushed out to buy a copy of my own. When *The Citadel of Chaos* and *The Forest of Doom* were published together a few months later I snapped both of them up at once. Whatever its faults, *Warlock* remains the gamebook as far as I am concerned – and Russ Nicholson the illustrator par

excellence. I always loved the way he drew smoke curling up from torches.

You've stated that *Warlock of Firetop Mountain* is effectively your favourite *Fighting Fantasy* adventure. Which others do you rate just as highly and why?

The *Sorcery!* books were the highpoint of the original series for me. I liked the magic system and the gameplay was a lot more believable than in other early books – you had to eat one square meal a day and you got tired if you went all night without sleeping. They were also the first books to have a detailed setting. Warren McGuire hit the nail on the head in *Fighting Fantazine* issue 5 when he wrote that, rather than being 'an artificial set created for the gamebooks... Kharé just seems to exist, and it feels like you just happen to have found



yourself in it.' I've said elsewhere that I like urban adventures, so no prizes for guessing that *Kharé – Cityport of Traps* was my favourite book of the four.

Of the more recent offerings, I'd go for *Howl of the Werewolf*. I loved the film *Van Helsing*, which Jonathan Green obviously references with his werewolf hero and the characters Van Richten and Katya Beckinsale, and there is something cinematic about the adventure too. Sometimes the gamebook structure can make encounters seem quite static (kick in the door, kill the orcs, open the next door and find something still sleeping soundly) but Jonathan Green's adventure has a breathless feel about it. It also has a proper plot and a puzzle to solve. *Kharé* and *Warlock* have the weight of nostalgia behind them, but I can honestly say that I

think *Howl* is the better gamebook.

When playing a *Fighting Fantasy* adventure, what do you think makes a good adventure?

First I have to be interested in the setting/back story or I won't bother playing at all. Once I start turning the pages I want to feel that I'm reading a story rather than a series of random encounters. The quest should be challenging but not too difficult; dying in the second encounter if I fail a simple *Test your Luck* roll (yes, I'm talking about *YOU Creature of Havoc!*) is not my idea of fun. The very best adventures will manage to build in

an element of mystery – something I didn't know when I had finished reading the Background but had to find out by playing. *Howl of the Werewolf* ticks all the boxes.

Do you think that *Fighting Fantasy* has ever had an influence on your life?

Everything I really need to know I learnt from reading *Fighting Fantasy*? Maybe not. But I do think that doing anything you enjoy, particularly when young, must have a positive effect.

Prior to the *Warlock* competition, had you attempted to write any of your own amateur *Fighting Fantasy* adventures?

Yes. For the next two years or so after *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*, I was a fanatical fan of *Fighting Fantasy*; I bought all the gamebooks as they

came out, including those of rival series, such as *Lone Wolf*; but I soon realised that it was more fun making up my own adventures than playing other people's.

Most of my first efforts were very short, often less than 25 paragraphs long, and completely unplanned. My standard tactic was to get hold of some paper, divide it up into paragraphs, and just start writing. *The Dervish Stone* was no different. If you look at the adventure, you'll see that all the paragraphs are about the same length; that was because each one was written to fill half an A5 page.

What is your current occupation?

At the moment I'm working for the Electoral Services team of my local council.

Did you ever have any ambitions to become a writer?

I still do. I'd love to write a book that people read and re-read because there is something truly original about it – Peter Ackroyd's *Hawksmoor* is one good example. Unfortunately, my ambition outstrips my talent.

What hobbies and interests do you pursue now?

I don't have any real hobbies. I'm a wannabe writer, so I spend most of my time in front of the computer, finding excuses to do anything but write. Currently, I'm not writing an alternate history novel.

ROMANCING THE STONE — WINNING THAT COMPETITION

When you heard about the competition, was entering something you thought of doing straight away?

Yes. The idea of having one of my adventures published in a proper magazine was a huge motivation.

How did you decide what *The Dervish Stone* should be about?

I think cities and deserts are my favourite *Fighting Fantasy* settings.

Above: Tim Sell's title page for *The Dervish Stone* as it was published in *Warlock* #4 (1984).



City of Thieves had already been published, but no one had done a desert adventure (*Temple of Terror* wouldn't come out for another year).

What would you cite as the primary influences on the adventure?

No one who has played *The Dervish Stone* will be surprised to learn that it was heavily influenced by the *Star Wars* films, in particular *Return of the Jedi*, and by *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The Lost Cave of the Dervishes is, of course, a straight rerun of the opening scenes in *South America*.

I know that a lot of people have criticised it for that. I would say two things in my defence: first, I was young and naive enough not to have heard of plagiarism. It didn't occur to me that people would not only be annoyed that I had stolen their imagination, but might see it as an attack on their livelihood (note to Lucasfilm; Penguin Books own the copyright to *The Dervish Stone*, go sue their asses not mine).

Secondly, the similarities are not accidental but a deliberate attempt to recreate those worlds. I asked myself; how would the encounter at the Sarlacc pit play if it was a straight

fantasy setting? Obviously you wouldn't have anti-grav ships or laser blasters, but maybe you could have a couple of Goblin archers on the back of a Griffin. With its princess, wizards and farm boy hero, *Star Wars* is a fairy tale transported to a sci-fi setting; I just transported it back. With hindsight, however, it would have been better not to have copied every little detail.

Were your family aware you had entered the competition and what was their reaction to your entry (did any get to read it before it was sent in)?

I think they got to hear about it whether they wanted to or not! If I remember rightly the rules of the competition stated

that entries had to be submitted as a typescript. As this was before the age of home PCs, that meant using a typewriter. Typing wasn't one of the special abilities on my Adventure Sheet but I did know a very useful spell called MUM (causes a long-suffering parent to do your bidding). She not only typed up my handwritten notes but also corrected the errors in my English. Thanks Mum!

Unfortunately some mistakes either got missed or were created by Penguin. I had to laugh at the imaginative description of 'spliced liquor' on Titannica; this was actually a typo – the original was 'spiced liquor'. Having said that, splicing drinks together sounds much more interesting and I'll definitely be trying it some time soon.

What advice would you give your younger self about writing a *Fighting*

Fantasy adventure?

Get as many people as possible to play test it; every pair of eyes will find something you've missed.

What was the wait like between submitting *The Dervish Stone* and finding out that you had won?

I didn't expect to win so the waiting was nothing compared to the wait before publication.

What was your reaction to winning the competition?

It was a real 'Turn to 400' moment.

What was your family and friends' reaction to your winning the competition?

It wasn't a big deal for my friends. My family were proud that I had won something but, as they had no interest in *Fighting Fantasy*, that was as far as it went.

Dungeon of Justice (printed in *Warlock* #5) was the runner up entry to the competition. What are your thoughts on this adventure when compared to your own?



Art: © Tim Sell, 2011.

Top: Tim Sell's "evil-looking Orc Mercenary" from paragraph 42.
Above: Sell's "great tawny cat" from paragraph 61.

No disrespect to Jonathan Ford but, twenty-five years down the line, I can't remember much about this adventure. I know it was some kind of trial by ordeal. I'm not a great fan of dungeon crawls in general, but at least Jonathan provided a good reason why a whole load of traps and monsters should be sitting around just waiting to kill you. I see he was from Cornwall too – must have been something in the water.

First prize, other than having your entry published in *Warlock*, was £100. Do you recall what you spent your winnings on?

No, sorry. I know I didn't blow it all at once.

Tim Sell was the *Fighting Fantasy* artist assigned to illustrate your adventure when it was printed. What was your reaction to seeing it illustrated and printed? What do you think of the art now?

When I heard that I had won the competition, seeing the illustrations was actually the main thing I was looking forward to. Inevitably, I was a bit disappointed when the finished result didn't quite match the pictures I had in my head.

Part of the problem was that I wasn't asked to supply any kind of briefing for the artwork, so Tim Sell had to work from the very short and inadequate descriptions I had provided in the text. That gave rise to a few misunderstandings. For example, the illustration opposite paragraph 61 shows two cat people teasing a moggy with string; what obviously didn't come over was that the 'great tawny cat' referred to was not a loveable little kitten but the fierce war-cat you have to fight in paragraph 40!

Looking back, I still think some of the monsters came out a bit goofy looking, particularly the "evil-looking Orc Mercenary" (paragraph 42) who looks like he's trying to shove something up his own arse. Alan Craddock's cover illustration, however, was a superb piece of art.

BEYOND THE JEWEL OF THE NILE

Do you feel that there is still a place in this age of hi-tech computer games for gamebooks?

I think amateur gamebooks will always be around, for the simple fact that most people can't design a DIY computer game. Commercially, I think gamebooks will only be able to compete if they offer something computer games can't or won't, such as top quality writing. I'd like to be the author of the first literary gamebook someday. Will *Fighting Fantasy* ever again reach the level of popularity it did in the 1980s? Probably not. But I'd be very happy if a new generation of fans came along and proved me wrong.

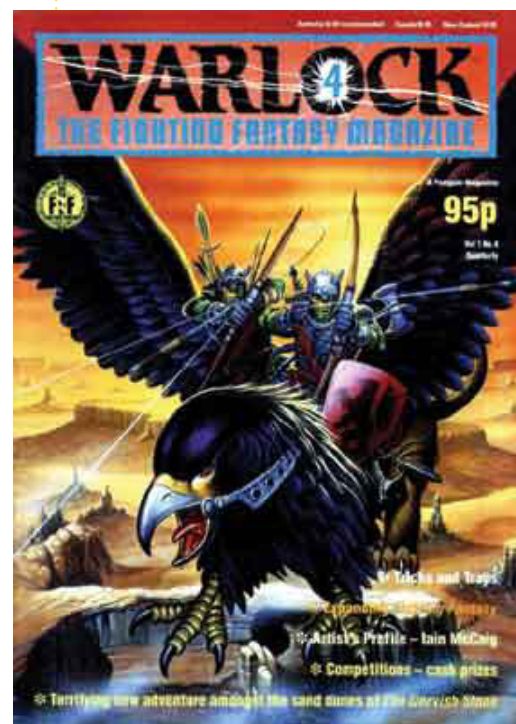
Did you ever attempt to submit either a second mini adventure to *Warlock* or a full length one to Puffin after this triumph?

I did submit one full-length adventure to Puffin (*Sands of Time*) with the hope of getting it published. It was to have been a sequel to *The Dervish Stone* in which the diamond's true purpose – and the reason why it had been protected by so many traps – was revealed.

The first draft was rejected but Puffin were really good about it; they had not only read my adventure but taken the trouble to itemise all the things they weren't happy with. One that sticks in my head was that I had included an encounter where you could kill another human being, something that wasn't acceptable in 1988. Stupidly, I never got round to producing a second draft; I was just about to go away to university and didn't want to attempt the laborious business of rewriting (and, more to the point, retyping) the whole thing.

Since 1984, what has been your relationship with *Fighting Fantasy*?

Until recently, I hadn't looked at or played a *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook for over twenty years. Like a lot of people, I moved on to role playing games as I got older, *Call of Cthulhu* and *Stormbringer* being particular



favourites, but by my mid-twenties I had lost interest in gaming altogether. I got rid of all my gamebooks, which is something I now regret as they were all first editions. I even threw away my complimentary copies of *Warlock 4*!

Some time ago, while I was searching the web for a .pdf version of *The Dervish Stone*, I stumbled across the entry on Titannica and was amazed to discover that there was a community of people who had not only kept the *Fighting Fantasy* flame burning but who had taken a lot of trouble to describe and rationalise the inconsistent world of Titan.

I read a few of the other entries and felt a rush of nostalgia for the genre. I played *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* again (and was shocked to find I couldn't remember where any of the keys were hidden), then got hold of some of the newer titles, such as Jonathan Green's atmospheric *Howl of the Werewolf*. Of course, re-reading the books made me want to write my own adventures again.

Fighting Fantazine extends its thanks to Paul Struth for agreeing to the interview. Meanwhile, Paul's new adventure *Queen of Shades* follows over the page!

FF

Above: The cover for issue #4 of *Warlock* with Alan Craddock's art for *The Dervish Stone*.

Queen of Shades

BY PAUL STRUTH

ILLUSTRATED BY ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

INTRODUCTION

You are one of those far-sighted individuals known to others as Sightmasters. Some years ago, you left your home in Analand in search of adventure. You found more than enough danger and excitement in Kharé, the infamous cityport of traps, where you quickly fell in with a disreputable sorcerer known as Fox and his band of adventurers. In the company of your new friends, you have undertaken countless quests in the wilds of Kakhabad. Your role in the group is that of the scout and your keen eyes have saved the lives of your companions on more than one occasion. Although you know no magic, you are more than able to defend yourself with the stout wooden quarterstaff that is your preferred weapon.

Before you take part in this adventure, you must first determine your own strengths and weaknesses. You use dice to determine your initial scores. On page 27 there is an *Adventure Sheet*, which you may use to record the details of your adventure. On it you will find boxes for recording the scores of your attributes. You are advised to either record your scores on the *Adventure Sheet* in pencil or to make photocopies of the sheet for future adventures.

Skill, Stamina and Luck

Roll one die. Add 6 to this number and enter the total in the SKILL box on the *Adventure Sheet*.

Roll two dice. Add 12 to the number rolled and enter the total in the STAMINA box.

Roll one die. Add 6 to this number and enter the total in the LUCK box.

For reasons that will be explained below, your SKILL, STAMINA and LUCK will change constantly during the adventure. You must keep an accurate record of these scores, and for this reason, you are advised to write small in the boxes or to keep an eraser handy. But never rub out your *Initial* scores. Although you may be rewarded additional SKILL, STAMINA and LUCK points, these totals may never exceed your *Initial* scores, except on very rare occasions, when you will be instructed on a particular page.

Your SKILL score reflects your general expertise in fighting and combat; the higher the better. Your STAMINA score reflects your strength, overall fitness and will to survive; the higher your STAMINA score, the longer you will be able to stay alive. Your LUCK score indicates how naturally lucky a person you are. Luck – and Magic – are facts of life in the fantasy world you are about to explore.

Battles

During your adventure, you will sometimes be told to fight a creature of some sort. An option to flee may be given, but if not – or if you choose to attack the creature anyway – you must resolve the battle as described below.

First, record the creature's SKILL and STAMINA scores on a spare sheet of paper. The scores for each creature are given in the book each time you have an encounter. You should also make a note of any special abilities or instructions which are unique to that

particular opponent. The sequence of combat is then:

1. Roll two dice for your opponent. Add its SKILL score. This total is the creature's Attack Strength.
2. Roll two dice for yourself. Add the number rolled to your current SKILL score. This total is your Attack Strength.
3. If your Attack Strength is higher, you have wounded your opponent. Proceed to step 4. If your opponent's Attack Strength is higher, it has wounded you. Proceed to step 5. If both Attack Strengths are the same, you have avoided each other's blows – start the next Attack Round from step 1 above.
4. You have wounded your opponent; subtract 2 points from its STAMINA score. You may use LUCK here to do additional damage (see below). Proceed to step 6.
5. Your opponent has wounded you; subtract 2 points from your STAMINA score. You may use LUCK to reduce the loss of STAMINA (see below). Proceed to step 6.
6. Make the appropriate adjustments to either the criminal's or your own STAMINA scores, and to your LUCK score if you used LUCK.
7. Begin the next Attack Round, starting again at step 1. This sequence continues until the STAMINA score of either you or the creature you are fighting has been reduced to zero (death). If you die, your adventure ends and you must start all over again by creating a new character.

It should have been an adventure like any other; an ancient tomb, a forgotten treasure and a band of brave souls willing to risk their lives in pursuit of fame and fortune. Now, a day after your successful return to Kharé, the notorious cityport of traps, two of your fellow adventurers lie dead – will YOU be the next victim of the curse?

Escaping

On some pages you will be given the option of running away from a battle should things be going badly for you. However, if you do run away, your opponent automatically scores one wound on you (subtract 2 STAMINA points) as you flee. Note that you may use LUCK on this wound in the normal way (see below). You may only *Escape* if that option is given to you on the page.

Fighting More Than One Opponent

If you are involved in a fight with more than one opponent, you must choose at the start of each Attack Round which of them you will be directing your own attack towards. Roll the dice for each of

the combatants. Resolve your own attack against your chosen opponent as normal (if you win your opponent loses 2 STAMINA points, if it wins you lose 2 STAMINA points). Then you must compare your own Attack Strength against that of all the other opponents. Any opponent with a higher Attack Strength than yours will wound you. You can only wound the opponent you chose at the start of the Attack Round, even if your Attack Strength is higher than one or more of the others.

Luck

At various times in you adventure you will be told to *Test your Luck*. The procedure for *Testing your Luck* is as follows: roll two dice. If the number rolled is less than or equal to your

current LUCK score, you have been Lucky and the outcome will be in your favour. If the number rolled is higher than your current LUCK score, you have been Unlucky and will be penalised.

Each time you *Test your Luck*, you must subtract 1 point from your current LUCK score. Thus, you will soon realise that the more you rely on your LUCK, the more risky this procedure will become.

Using Luck in Battles

In battles, you always have the option of using your LUCK either to score a more serious wound on an opponent you have just wounded or to minimise the effects of a wound you have just received.

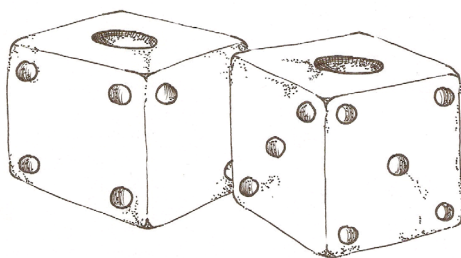
If you have just wounded an

**Queen of Shades
Adventure Sheet**

SKILL Initial Skill =	STAMINA Initial Stamina =	LUCK Initial Luck =	GOLD	NOTES
EQUIPMENT				

opponent: you may *Test your Luck* as described above. If you are Lucky, you have inflicted a severe wound; deduct an extra 2 points from your opponent's STAMINA score. However, if you are Unlucky, your blow only scratches your opponent, and you deduct only 1 point from your opponent's STAMINA (instead of scoring the normal 2 points of damage, you now only score 1).

If the opponent has wounded you: you may *Test your Luck* to try to minimize the damage. If you are Lucky, your opponent's blow only grazes you; deduct only 1 point from your STAMINA. If you are Unlucky, your wound is a serious one and you must deduct 1 extra STAMINA point (i.e., a total of 3 points from your own STAMINA). Remember: you must subtract 1 point from your LUCK score each time you *Test your Luck*.



More About Your Attributes

Skill

Your SKILL score will not change much during the course of your adventure. Occasionally a paragraph may give you instructions to increase or decrease your SKILL score, but it may never exceed its *Initial* value unless specifically instructed.

Stamina and Provisions

Your STAMINA score will change a lot during your adventure. As you near your goal, your STAMINA level may be dangerously low and battles may be particularly risky, so be careful!

You start this adventure without provisions of any kind. You have just returned to the city after a wilderness adventure. Meals are readily available in markets and taverns, so you do not need to carry extra food with you.

But be warned – if you do not eat anything, you will become weaker and may lose STAMINA as a result.

Your STAMINA score may never exceed its *Initial* value unless specifically instructed.

Luck

Additions to your LUCK score may be awarded in the adventure when you have been particularly lucky. Details are given, where appropriate, in the paragraphs of the book. Remember that, as with SKILL and STAMINA, your LUCK score may never exceed its *Initial* value unless specifically instructed.

Libra – The Goddess of Justice

During your adventure you will be watched over by your own goddess, Libra. If the going gets tough you may call on her for aid. But she will only help you once.

Equipment and Money

You start your adventure with a bare minimum of equipment. You have a wooden quarterstaff as your weapon and a backpack to hold any items you may come across. A small knife hangs on your belt.

You have a belt pouch containing Gold Pieces, the universal currency of all the known lands.

Roll one die. Add 4 to this number and enter the total in the GOLD box on the *Adventure Sheet*. This is the number of Gold Pieces with which you start the adventure.



BACKGROUND

It should have been an adventure like any other: an ancient tomb, a forgotten treasure, and a band of brave souls willing to risk their lives in pursuit of fame and fortune. That this particular quest would rip the heart out of your small group was the last thing on your mind that misty Kharé morning as you joined Fox and the others, ready to take ship for Lake Lumlé.

Fox the sorcerer was well known in the cityport for buying up old scrolls. The zeal with which he located and acquired them was the equal of any scholar – but whereas true scholars sought to recover the culture and wisdom of vanished ages, Fox looked only for the last resting places of the ancient dead. The kings and queens of old Lumlé had been raising vast stone temples and monuments when Kharé was nothing more than a camp for river pirates. Their tombs had long since been looted of any gold or precious stones but experience had taught Fox that they often contained works of art, scorned or overlooked by earlier robbers, whose beauty and craftsmanship could still command high prices. The wealthy nobles and merchants of upstart Kharé were keen to flaunt their own culture and influence by acquiring these tokens of ancient power – and Fox was more than happy to supply their need, provided the price was right and no questions were asked.

The Iltikar scroll was damaged; more than half the text had been lost and the remaining runes were hard to decipher in places. It seemed obvious, however, that it was an elegy; in rhyming couplets, the poet mourned the passing of dearly beloved Iltikar, a queen of the nineteenth dynasty. She had been dead two thousand years and the place names had all been forgotten but Fox was confident that he could identify the location of her tomb from the landmarks described so vividly by the poet.



The fishing villages dotted around the shores of the great lake offered few clues to the former power and glory of the Lumlé kingdom. It was said that the blood of that ancient race lived on in the inhabitants of the miserable reed huts but, if you saw, here and there, a face that resembled one of the fallen statues, their great poverty was anything but regal. The local people kept away from the monuments of their ancestors, not, it seemed, out of fear but rather from indifference. The ancient places lay abandoned and unguarded, all of which suited your purpose. On the island of Nilgiri your small group became perhaps the first people in two thousand years to enter the tomb of Queen Iltikar.

Your torches smoked in the damp air. The heavy stone blocks on either side were moss covered and wet; water seeped between them and if you feared anything it was that the lake would suddenly burst through into the tunnels and drown you all. But the masonry that had endured two millennia held firm long enough for you to reach your goal. The Crolian shoved back the heavy lid of the sarcophagus and you looked upon the remains of the long dead queen. In her skeletal hands she still clasped the ornate hand mirror with which she had been buried. The glass was framed by intricate silver scrollwork, untarnished despite the years it had lain in the tomb. It was just the sort of artefact that you had come looking for, a treasure that would fetch a high price when you returned to Kharé.



The trouble started before you had even reached the cityport. That night, as the boat drifted lazily downriver on the current, a noise disturbed your

sleep and you woke, your instincts screaming danger. Jardakka the Red-Eye emerged from the blackness, scimitar in hand, and you tensed; was this treachery? But Jardakka was as uneasy as you; Cheechak, the small monkey that went everywhere with her, now clung to her shoulder, chattering nervously. Something had spooked the animal. But there were no pirates, no river monsters, and the helmsman protested he had seen nothing. Only then did you notice that Vanaru the thief was missing.

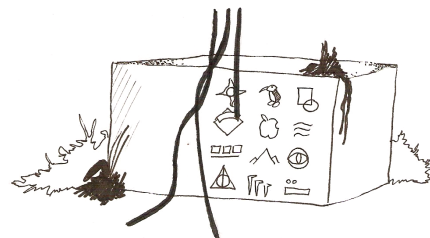


Of course, your first thought was for the mirror of Iltikar. A quick search revealed that the treasure was safe, still lying where Fox had stashed it. Instead it was Vanaru who had disappeared, without warning and without his pack. No satisfactory explanation could be found; all you could do was assume that he must have fallen overboard in the night. The little man couldn't swim and so must certainly have drowned. It was bad luck, a sour end to what had been a successful quest.

The ship arrived in Kharé the following evening. The four of you parted company at the port, having arranged to meet the next day. Fox took the mirror of Iltikar; only he had

the contacts to Kharé's wealthy elite necessary to arrange a successful sale. You didn't object; that was how it had worked in the past, that was how it would work again. And this time you could really make some money. The mirror, properly presented and dressed up in the silky verses of the poet, could not fail to appeal to a wealthy buyer. The sentimental heart of some merchant's wife was going to make you all rich.

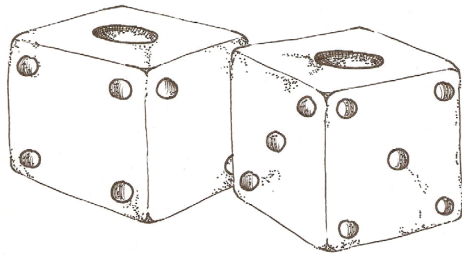
Unfortunately the Crolian did not live to see the money. That night a drunken brawl in an upstairs room of The Wayfarer's Rest reduced your little band to three. No one could say for sure how it started – although it was rumoured to be a fight over a woman – nor who had struck the death blow. The others vanished, leaving the Crolian mortally wounded amongst the wreckage of the room. His last words, whispered to the innkeeper, were lost; no one had ever been able to understand anything The Crolian said, not even you, who had been his partner on countless adventures. It didn't diminish the affection you felt for the barbarian and his death came as a heavy blow.



Now night is falling over Kharé once more. You are brooding over events in an upstairs room of a lodging house, your thoughts disturbed by the arguments of the other tenants and the barking of a stray dog in the courtyard below. The room is bare, furnished with nothing more than the straw pallet on which you lie. You don't mind the lack of comfort; ever since you came to the infamous cityport of traps, leaving the safety of Analand for a life of adventure, you have been accustomed to hardship. You have faced countless dangers with Fox and the others but never have you felt such a creeping sense of unease. Vanaru and the Crolian are

dead. As the shadows around you deepen, you cannot help but wonder if the mirror of Ittikar might not be... cursed?

Turn to paragraph 1.



1

The room is dark, the window above you a square of blue-black sky in which the first stars can be seen. How long have you been sleeping? You roll over and tense as your sharp eyes pick out two figures in the shadows by the door. They move slowly towards you as if in a dream, their white faces pale in the darkness. You might have considered those faces beautiful if you could not read your death in their fixed expressions.

As you scramble to your feet, the warrior women stop their silent advance and raise swords and shields, ready for battle. The way they hold themselves tells you that this will not be an easy fight. These are no pretend amazons, the bodyguard of some decadent aristocrat, but seasoned fighters who shift position to counter your every move. They seem in no great hurry to attack you. They know that they have you cornered.

Their silence is eerie; you are accustomed to jibes and taunts, mental fencing before the inevitable explosion of physical violence, but you cannot even hear these women breathe. Their faces betray no sign of emotion, neither hate nor triumph, and their armour is like nothing you have ever seen before. A bronze cuirass, worn over a padded linen tunic, protects the body, leaving their upper arms and legs bare. Forearms and shins are encased in greaves, a type of armour that has long since fallen out of fashion. Their swords are not the long, slashing weapons generally favoured in Kakhabad but short, stabbing blades ideal for combat in the confined space of your



room. Your mind races: who uses female assassins? And why would they want to kill you? For that is surely what the women before you have in mind.

You face them unarmed; the wooden quarterstaff that is your normal weapon leans against the wall in the far corner of the room, frustratingly out of reach. The warrior women stand between you and the door to the stairs; at your back is an open window, but the room is on the second floor and it is a long drop to the packed earth of the courtyard below. What will you do?

Try to talk to the warrior women? Turn to 76.

Make a dash for your quarterstaff? Turn to 141.

Jump out of the window?

Turn to 209.

2

'Five Gold Pieces, if you please. And a bottle for you, mistress?'

You give the thin man his money and each receive in return a glass vial containing a thick dark liquid. When she uncorks her bottle, Jardakka makes a face; the liquid has a bitter smell.

Despite some misgivings, you swallow the Potion of Life. You are now both immune against all poisons for the next month. Continue on your way by turning to 66.

3

You look at Jardakka and she nods.

‘Sorry, Fox,’ you tell the sorcerer. ‘I’m not crossing Vik. Whatever is between you two is for you to sort out.’

You leave the square with the Red-Eye.

‘What do you want to do now? Pay the merchant a visit?’

Jardakka shakes her head. ‘Now we get ourselves so much magical protection that no one will mess with us, not Vik, not Shar-kali-Sharri, nor those shield-witches.’

If you think you should go to the merchant’s house, turn to **163**. If you would rather rely on magic, turn to **87**.

4

‘That’s them!’ Snitch cries. ‘By Courga’s grace, I swear it’s them!’ Turn to **204**.

5

Jardakka smashes the locks with three quick blows of her sword. Before you can look through the chest, however, the double doors in the far wall are thrown open. The noise has roused the occupants of the house. Turn to **119**.

6

The house is chill and gloomy; you decide to wait in a room on the first floor, overlooking the canal, that at least catches the sun. You wait several hours but nothing happens. Jardakka gets bored and decides to explore the rest of the house once more. You hear her moving from room to room below.

The patch of sunlight disappears and the room quickly loses its warmth; evening is coming on. You cannot waste any more time waiting. You get up and go downstairs, calling to Jardakka to join you. There is no reply. You walk from room to room, looking for her, but the house is empty. Jardakka has disappeared!

The bundle of rags you noticed earlier starts to move and shift. You hear a groan as the sleeping vagrant wakes. An old woman sits up against the

wall. Her skin is dirty, her hair matted with filth. She beckons to you to come closer.

If you want to approach the old woman, turn to **103**. If you would rather leave the house and find Jardakka, turn to **212**.

7

Your nose catches the smell of food and you realise how hungry you are. You are passing the low stone building that serves as the Longshoremen’s Guild Hall. The guild runs a refectory that is open to all; a slate positioned outside the door advertises meals for 2 Gold Pieces.

If you want to eat at the guild hall, turn to **91**. If you have a koorda fruit and would rather snack on that, turn to **157**. If you decide not to eat anything, turn to **215**.

8

The back door of the house opens and a SOLDIER MANT appears, silhouetted against the light. The insect man sees you at once and rushes forward, waving two swords. You must fight him.

SOLDIER MANT SKILL 8 STAMINA 10

The Mant will fight both you and Jardakka at the same time. Conduct your battle as normal. Each Attack Round, roll 1 die to see if Jardakka has wounded the creature – if you roll a 5 or 6, you may deduct 2 additional STAMINA points.

If you win, you may slip through the open door into the lighted corridor beyond. Turn to **110**.

9

Jardakka draws her scimitar and threatens the Gnome, while you grab the bundle of cloth containing the sword.

‘Sorry, Hagbut, but our need is greater than yours.’

You start to back off towards the door. Hagbut calmly takes up a bamboo flute and begins to play a weird melody. The tune is infectious and, despite the seriousness of your situation, you find yourself whistling along. Jardakka seems to be having

trouble holding her sword. She waves it dangerously around her head, hopping from one foot to the other. You drop the bundle on the floor and join her in a wild dance around the shop. Hagbut watches you for a minute, then pipes you both to the door. Before you quite know what is happening, you find yourself outside without the sword you were intent on stealing a minute before. Passers by laugh and stand to one side as you dance down the middle of the street. Only when you are some distance away from Hagbut’s shop are you able to come to an exhausted halt. Turn to **111**.

10

The fall knocks all the breath out of you. Roll 1 die and deduct that number of STAMINA points.

If you wish, you may *Test your Luck* in an attempt to reduce the damage. If you are Lucky, subtract two from the number rolled; if you rolled a six, for example, you now lose only 4 STAMINA points. If you rolled a one or two, you have been incredibly lucky and escaped without any injuries. If you are Unlucky, however, the damage is worse than you first thought – you lose an additional 2 STAMINA points.

If you are still alive, pick yourself up and turn to **100**.

11

You must face the Mant unarmed. Deduct 2 points from your Attack Strength.

SOLDIER MANT SKILL 8 STAMINA 10

The Mant will fight both you and Jardakka at the same time. Conduct your battle as normal. Each Attack Round, roll 1 die to see if Jardakka has wounded the creature – if you roll a 4, 5 or 6, you may deduct 2 additional STAMINA points.

If you win, turn to **177**.

12

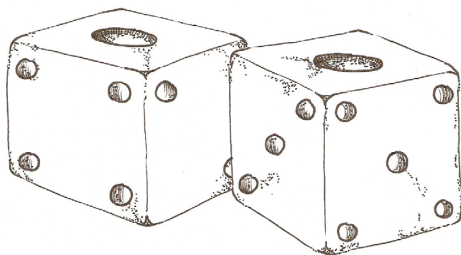
You call at Fox’s house but the sorcerer has not yet returned home. If you met Vik earlier, turn to **203**. Otherwise, turn to **144**.

13

The lightning bolt hits you square in the chest, knocking you back off your chair. Lose 4 STAMINA points.

When you open your eyes, Jardakka and Fox are leaning over you, asking if you are all right. Madam Hun hovers in the background. Having satisfied herself that you are not dead, the ogress stomps off. 'But don't let me catch you fighting in here again!'

Fox holds up his hands in a conciliatory gesture and you take your places at the table. Turn to 136.



14

The street comes to a dead end at a small river flowing between the houses. A large group of female SVINNS have gathered on the bank to do their washing. Some are folding the clothes and putting them into wicker baskets. Others are standing in the water, beating the clothes with heavy wooden sticks. The washerwomen are splashing and laughing with each other. You ask one of them where the Witch of Krooe lives but she does not know. You have no choice but to retrace your steps and either climb the hill (turn to 149), or go back to the square and take the other street (turn to 205).

15

The girl bursts into tears. 'But I don't have it!' she wails.

Jardakka holds her blade to the cyclops' throat. 'Where – is – it?' she hisses.

'In my room,' the girl sobs. Under further threats, she reveals that her room is the third door on the upper floor of the house.

Before you can ask her anything else, the light comes closer and you see the priest of Slangg returning with a SOLDIER MANT. Jardakka curses.

The pair of you leave the weeping girl and run off down the street towards the river. Turn to 80.

16

You fight one of the bone men, while Jardakka tackles the other.

SKELETON

WARRIOR

SKILL 8

STAMINA 6

If you defeat the skeleton, turn to 139.

17

Despite your best attempts to conceal your faces, you remain conspicuous as the rest of the porters are all insect men. The Worker Mants are too dimwitted to stop you picking up one of the bales and joining their column but as soon as you approach the house you are challenged by the officious Minimite.

'Hey! You two! What do you think you are doing?'

He flits over to you and you realise that your plan has failed miserably. You drop the bales and ready your weapons. Turn to 145.

18

The Serpentine bids you wait while she fetches her master. After some minutes, the double doors open again and Shar-kali-Sharri enters the great hall.

Your first sight of the merchant is quite a shock. You had no idea what he looked like, but the thought of a 'rich merchant' conjured up certain prejudices. He would be perfumed and fat, cushioned by his great wealth, or he would be a miser, thin and grasping. Nothing prepared you for the giant of a man who now stands before you, regarding you with the single eye in the middle of his forehead. Shar-kali-Sharri is a CYCLOPS. Although he is richly dressed, his manner is as rough as the big hands he places firmly on his hips.

'Cursed my arse! You expect me to believe such rubbish? I didn't get where I am today by believing fables fit for children!'

You tell the merchant about the unfortunate deaths of Vanaru and the

Crolian and your own encounter with the Shield Maidens.

'So the only living person to see these women is you, Sightmaster? How convenient! Do you think because I have only one eye I can't see through your tricks? I've paid good money for that mirror and I'm not giving it to two rogues who blunder in to my house telling ghost stories!'

Jardakka shoots you a quick glance.

'We were given to understand by our associate Fox that no money had changed hands.'

'More lies!' the Cyclops roars. 'And I've got the account books to prove it. Two hundred Gold Pieces I paid the sorcerer through my friend Enno here; if you want the mirror back you'll have to give me three hundred!'

Jardakka mutters under her breath.

'The thing is, my lord, the mirror was not his to sell, at least not his alone...'

Shar-kali-Sharri cuts you off with a wave of his hand. 'I see how it is now! Always thought that Fox was too sly for his own good. Well, your squabbles are no concern of mine. How much will it take to get rid of you? Shall we say twenty Gold Pieces each? That's forty in total, a more than generous offer for something I've already bought fair and square. Enno, go along to my strongbox and get the money now!'

If you want to take the merchant's money and leave, turn to 33. If you refuse the money, telling the merchant it will be no help to you if the mirror is not returned to Iltikar's tomb, turn to 150.



19

The fish cake is hot and burns your fingers. It proves to be rather greasy and tasteless but you are hungry and wolf it down quickly.

You ask the Man-Orc if he has heard of the Witch of Krooe but he shakes his head. You leave him and continue along the quayside, heading towards the city centre. The sky on the far side of the river is already growing dark. Night is falling; you are running out of time and ideas.

The merchant Shar-kali-Sharri has his house on the waterfront. One possibility would be to go straight there and attempt to steal the mirror under the cover of darkness. On the other hand, it might be better to find Fox first; there is strength in numbers.

If you want to follow the river to the house of Shar-kali-Sharri, turn to 47. If you would rather look for Fox, turn to 121.



20

Your sharp eyesight picks out an area of deeper darkness that lies like a shadow on the ground between the trees. The shimmering black circle reminds you of the portal traps used by the nobles of Kharé to protect their homes. Poor Cheechak must have stumbled through it. Jardakka is reluctant to leave her pet behind but you convince her that it is too dangerous to follow the monkey through the portal. You give the circle a wide berth and continue on your way. Turn to 175.

21

There are 6 Gold Pieces scattered across the table. You may take these with you if you wish. However, the noise of the battle has roused the other occupants of the house. You hear footsteps in the corridor outside and the door of the guardroom is flung open. Turn to 119.

22

The witch laughs. 'Then leave this house!'

You stagger towards the door, only to find that it is locked. You pull and push against it but it will not budge. You try to back away, ready to charge it down, but your hand has become stuck to the door handle. As you struggle to free yourself, you hear an ominous growl behind you. Turn to 220.

23

'Two Gold Pieces, that would be a kindness. What would you know?'

Snitch claims to have information that might interest you about Fox and the merchant Shar-kali-Sharri.

If you want to ask him what he knows about Fox, turn to 118. If you would rather ask him about the merchant, turn to 191.

24

Snake Eyes is a game of chance that has become very popular in Kharé. The rules are quite simple. Roll two dice. If the total adds up to seven, you win. If you roll double one – snake eyes – you lose. If you roll any other number, you must pass the dice to Vik. This continues until one of you rolls seven or the other is eliminated.

In this game, you will be playing against Vik only. If you win, you keep the 3 Gold Pieces you have staked and Vik will tell you his story. If you lose, you also lose your stake.

You may play as many times as you wish until you win, but for each new game you must stake at least one Gold Piece.

When you win a game, turn to 114. If you run out of Gold Pieces or wish to stop playing, turn to 174.

25

You hear the sound of bolts being drawn back, then a loud creak as the door opens. An old servant woman, bent almost double under a pronounced hunchback, comes out and glances in both directions along the street. For a moment she appears to stare directly at you, but you cannot tell if she has seen you hiding

in the shadows as her shawl covers most of her face.

You see a glimmer of light further down the street and hear the sound of footsteps approaching; the old woman must have heard it too as she breathes a sigh of relief. She closes the door behind her and limps away towards the light.

If you want to run across and try the door, turn to 102. If you would rather continue down to the waterfront, turn to 80.

26

You groan and stagger to your feet, glancing up quickly at the window three storeys above. You are in the courtyard at the back of the lodging house, a square of damp earth enclosed by dark, decaying outbuildings, the foul smells from which hint at their uses as a latrine and a pig sty. A faint mist clings to the bare earth in front of you and, as you watch, it moves and thickens until the SHIELD MAIDENS are standing before you once more, armed and ready to do battle. You realise that these are no mortal enemies. If ever you needed Libra's protection, it is now. Turn to 127.



27

Krooe is a settlement in the west of the city, a poor area inhabited mostly by recent migrants from the surrounding countryside. You leave the centre and follow a muddy track across some fields. The village clusters around several small waterways running down to the river Jabaji. The streets here are narrow, the houses little more than huts. There are fewer shops and the goods they have for sale are of poor quality. At length, the lane you are following emerges into a square with a well in the middle. The people going about their business here have ugly, misshapen faces. They are SVINNS, Man-Orcs from the village of Torrepani. You decide to ask them if they know where you can find the witch. Who will you approach?

- A young man leaning idly against the doorframe of a house? Turn to 79.
- An old man sitting on the steps of the well? Turn to 122.
- Two young women laughing and chattering as they walk? Turn to 173.

28

Jardakka groans as the first Shield Maiden manages to pierce her defences. Numbed by the blow, she drops the Sword of Glantanka and sinks to her knees. With a speed born of desperation, you snatch up the sword and continue the battle.

SKILL

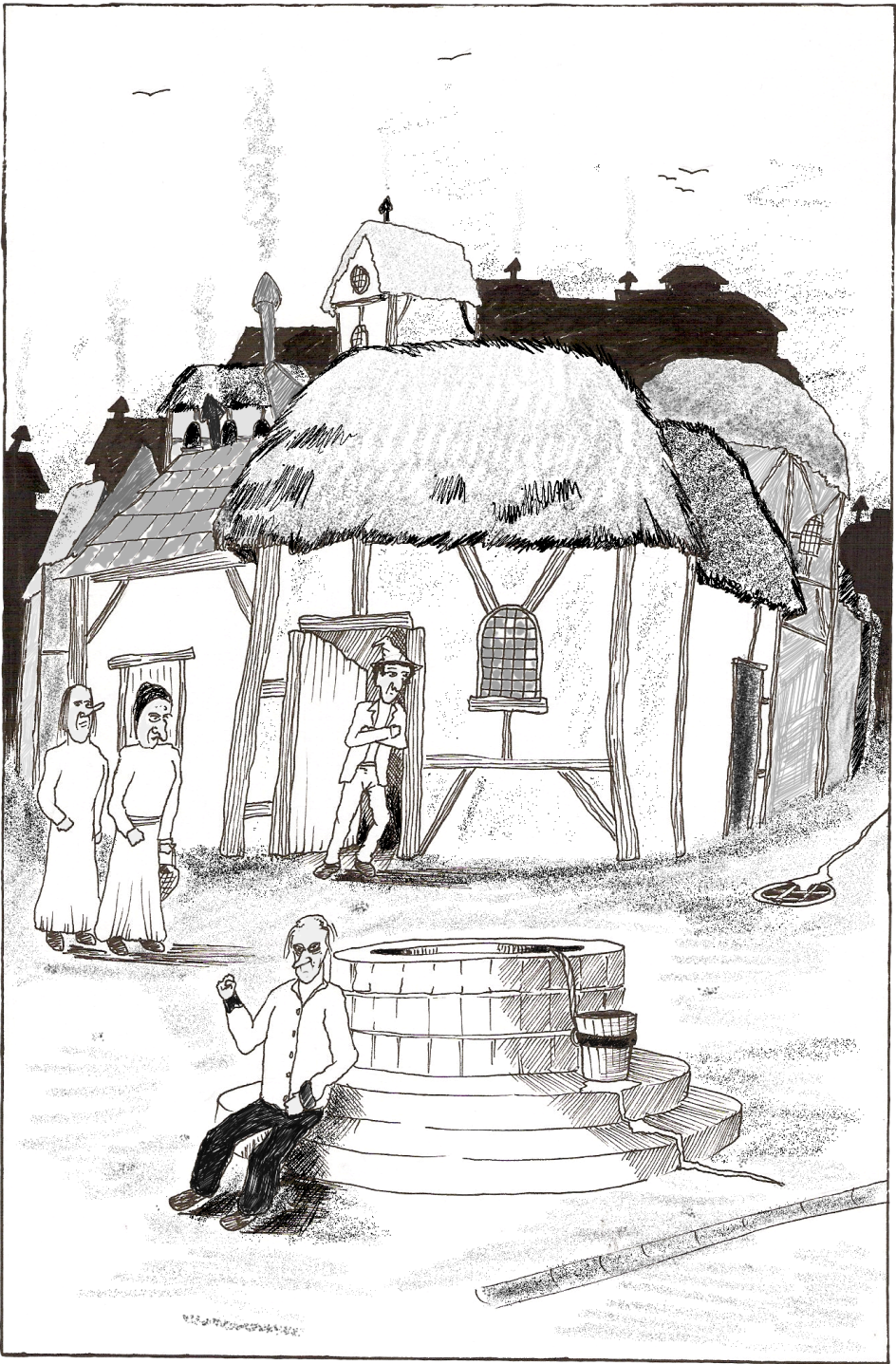
STAMINA		
First SHIELD MAIDEN	9	3
Second SHIELD MAIDEN		
	8	8

You must fight both ghosts at the same time but, now you are wielding the Sword of Glantanka, you have the power to wound them as normal. Each time a Shield Maiden wounds you, you will lose 1 SKILL and 2 STAMINA points.

If you manage to defeat them both, turn to 108.

29

You are in a darkened corridor on the first floor of the house. There is a closed and shuttered window in the middle of the wall to your left and



another at the far end of the corridor. The only light comes from a lamp burning outside a door immediately to your right; further along the same wall are two similar doors. You cannot hear any noise from any of them. Which door will you open?

- The first door? Turn to 190.
- The second door? Turn to 171.
- The third door? Turn to 97.

Or, if you would rather, you may go back down the stairs to the great hall. Turn to 65.

30

You tell Hagbut you are looking for a beeswax candle. The Gnome frowns and bites his knuckles. He rummages around, opening and closing one or two chests as if to conjure up the missing artefact.

‘I have beeswax but not a candle made out of beeswax,’ he admits at last. ‘I can get one for you but it might be easier and quicker to visit the shop across the way. Aku sells lanterns and the like, he may also stock candles. A word of warning though: Jardakka should stay outside. Aku absolutely hates Red-Eyes as his brother was

blinded by one.'

You thank Hagbut for his advice and go across to the shop on your own. Turn to 93.



31

Broken glass crunches under your boots and there is a smell of burning in the air. You find a lantern and light it.

The room looks like a storm has ripped through it. Fox's possessions lie scattered across the floor. Furniture is smashed and there is a black scorchmark in the middle of one wall. At the foot of the stairs, you come across a pile of charred bones and the remains of a black cloak. Cautiously you climb the stairs, weapons ready for any danger.

You find Fox in the ruins of his study. The sorcerer is lying face down on the floor, unmoving. His hair is clotted with dried blood.

'Is he dead?' Jardakka asks.

You kneel at the sorcerer's side. The fingers of his outstretched hand are curled up into a claw, cold and unyielding. 'I'm afraid so.'

'Jishai! Curse all the gods!'

'Curse rather the bone men. They are the ones to blame.'

There is nothing more you can do for Fox and so you leave the house. Turn to 167.

32

Before the MANT sees you, you jump down on the far side of the wall. Turn to 221.

33

Your readiness to agree to his suggestion confirms the merchant's

suspicious about you.

'Just as I thought! All just a ruse to wheedle some money out of me. Well, Shar-kali-Sharri is an honest man, nevertheless, and keeps his word.'

Enno the Minimate returns in the company of two Soldier Mants, carrying a bag of Gold Pieces.

'Don't add insult to injury by counting it,' the Cyclops warns. 'Forty Gold Pieces I said you'd have and forty Gold Pieces is what you've got.'

He turns and stalks from the room, the Minimate fluttering along close to his ear.

You agree with Jardakka that you will look after the money for now; if you decide to go separate ways, you will give her half of whatever is left. Turn to 82.

34

You run off down the street. Behind you, the merchant Shar-kali-Sharri leans out of the window and, in a loud voice, calls upon Libra to bring the full weight of justice crashing down upon your heads. For now, his rage is in vain; you run on, letting yourself be swallowed up by the tangle of dark streets behind the harbour district. Only when you are certain that you are not being followed do you come to a halt.

'We are free!' Jardakka shouts at the moon. 'Free of the curse!'

She glances at you and falls silent. Involuntarily, you put your hand to your face and feel the empty socket where your right eye once was. In some ways you can see more clearly without it.

'No, not yet,' you say, shaking your head slowly.

'But you broke the glass!'

'I released their souls, at least I think I did. They are mortal now, but I don't think they will leave us in peace. If anything, they have even more reason to hate us now. I think they will not rest until we are dead.'

Jardakka's eyes flash in the darkness.

'Or until we kill them. We should hunt them down.'

'No need I think; they will find us.'

If you should meet the Shield Maidens again in the course of this adventure, deduct 99 from the reference you are on and turn to the new paragraph to find out the consequences of breaking the mirror. You will not be given an option to do this in the text, so make a note on your *Adventure Sheet*.

If you have not done so already, you may go to look for Fox (turn to 121). If you think you should get some rest, turn to 147.

35

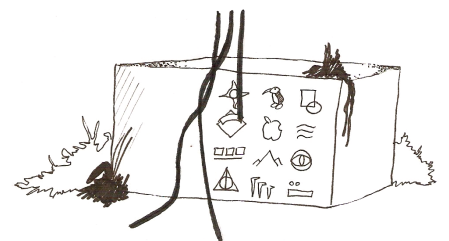
The captain takes your money and bows again. He calls across two of his crew and they lever open the wooden crates containing the statues. The stone figures are gently lifted out, allowing you to climb in. As you fit yourself into the confined space, your weapon by your side, you have the feeling that you are being buried alive.

'You understand, of course, that we must secure the lids,' the Black Elf continues. 'But we shall use only two nails, so that you can force them open from the inside.'

You nod in agreement and the lid of your crate is nailed into place. You feel yourself being picked up and lifted out onto the quay.

'Careful there!' the captain shouts. 'We do not want to damage our valuable cargo!'

The crate lies on the quay for what seems a very long time. Your limbs grow numb and you fear that you will suffocate. Eventually the crate is lifted again, presumably by one of the Worker Mants. You hear the voice of



Enno the Minimite, very close to you.

‘Two stone statues?’ he queries.

‘A gift, excellency,’ the captain says, ‘a proof of my good faith. Sealed within these crates are two thieves who thought to bribe their way into your house. I trust that you will do with them as you see fit.’

The crates are wrenched open and you are seized by the Soldier Mants. Your adventure ends here.

36

The door is unlocked and opens inwards. The room beyond is in darkness but the light from the corridor allows you to see that it contains wine butts. It seems highly unlikely that you will find the mirror here, so you close the door again without bothering to search the buttery. Turn back to **110**.

37

After you have walked a little way, you hear shouts and cries for help. In a dirty alleyway off to your left, three KLATTAMEN are attacking a man-orc with wooden clubs. The helpless Svinn lies on the ground, trying to shield himself from their blows.

If you want to help him, turn to **109**. If you would rather not get involved, turn to **184**.

38

You have time to steal two items from the shop. Choose from the following:

- A beeswax candle
- A cloth bag containing 12 Gold Pieces
- A throwing knife
- A rusty lamp
- A coil of rope
- A leather water bottle

The throwing knife can be used at the start of any battle. Roll 2 dice; if the total is equal to or less than your SKILL score, the knife hits your opponent and inflicts 2 STAMINA points of damage. Leave the shop quickly by turning to **111**.

39

‘What happened?’ Jardakka demands. ‘Where is Cheechak?’

You point out the shimmering black circle. ‘Shar-kali-Sharri. The merchant is not ready to give up on the mirror. He has created a portal in his house that leads to this island. Cheechak stumbled through it.’

‘Jishai!’ Jardakka makes a move towards the circle but you hold her back.

‘We have a job to do,’ you remind her. ‘Don’t get yourself killed for a monkey.’

Jardakka’s eyes flash angrily but she sees the sense in your words. You wait by the circle but neither Cheechak nor any other insect men follow you through the portal. After some while you persuade the reluctant Red-Eye to continue without Cheechak. Turn to **175**.

40

Test your Luck. If you are Lucky, you continue on your way unnoticed (turn to **167**). If you are Unlucky, you hear a familiar voice and your heart sinks (turn to **4**).

41

The serpent’s coils continue to writhe even in death, smearing the floor with blood. Jardakka has already succeeded in disarming the Cyclops and now holds her blade to the merchant’s throat. She demands that he hand over the mirror to you but Shar-kali-Sharri is a brave man and is not easily intimidated. In a loud voice, he calls on Libra to save him from the thieves who have invaded his home.

There is a blinding white light, like a flash of lightning, and the day’s events rush before your eyes. Turn to **165**.

42

Enno the Minimite takes one look at you and calls inside the house for reinforcements. Two more insect men come to the door to join the two already standing guard there.

‘My lord has given orders that on *no account* are you to be admitted to his house again,’ the Minimite informs you, taking care to hover beyond your reach. ‘If you have a proposal for him you are to submit it in writing.’

You see that you will not get anywhere by causing trouble and decide to walk away. The Minimite watches until you are out of sight. Turn to **215**.

43

The cloud of dust buzzes, like a swarm of angry bees. If you have a flask of holy water, turn to **181**. If not, turn to **70**.

44

‘What do we do now?’ Jardakka demands.

‘Libra says we must return the mirror to Iltikar’s tomb.’ You shrug. ‘I know it won’t be easy.’

‘It will be more difficult than you think,’ Fox says. ‘I sold the mirror yesterday evening.’

‘You sold it? Who to?’

‘A minimite. Pompous little fellow called Enno. He said he was acting for the merchant Shar-kali-Sharri. I checked the merchant out; he’s rich enough all right. Has a big stake in the Mutton Fish trade but his real passion is collecting artwork from old Lumlé.’

‘Good for him,’ Jardakka sneers. ‘How much did he pay?’

Fox holds his hands up. ‘That’s not how it works. These collectors want to handle the piece personally before they agree on a price.’

‘You gave him the mirror for nothing?’

‘Believe me, it will work in our favour in the long run. Once Shar-kali-Sharri has seen the mirror he will pay any price we ask.’

‘Jishai!’ Jardakka thumps the table angrily. ‘You screwed us. You took his damned money for yourself.’

The Red-Eye blinks and you see the fireballs building behind her eyelids. Sensing her anger, Cheechak yelps and leaps up onto a roof beam above your table.

If you want to grab her arm and try

to calm Jardakka, turn to **104**. If you would rather not get involved in any confrontation, turn to **202**.

45

As you bring your quarterstaff down, the old woman turns her face upwards and hisses at you. Her hair has become a mass of snakes! You feel your arms stiffen and cry out in horror as your body turns to stone before your eyes. Turn to **220**.

46

Although you waste a lot of time looking, you can not find Fox anywhere. As is the habit of sorcerers, he seems to have vanished into thin air. As darkness starts to fall across Kharé, you decide to give up the fruitless search of the port district. By this time, Fox may already have returned home. Turn to **7**.

47

You approach the house under cover of darkness. The doors are already closed. A lantern has been lit over the entrance, before which two SOLDIER MANTS stand guard. The insect men are fierce fighters and you realise at once that a direct assault makes little sense.

To your left, a high wall runs parallel to the street, enclosing the grounds of the house. If you want to follow the wall, turn to **116**.

To your right, the street runs down to the river Jabaji, where Shar-kali-Sharri has a private quay. If you want to walk along the waterfront, turn to **80**.

48

The inside of the shop is cluttered with equipment of all kinds, most of it used. A big OGRE leans on the counter; the shopkeeper is talking to another of his kind, a boatman to judge by the anchor tattooed on his hairy forearm. The conversation stops as you enter and the shopkeeper fixes Jardakka with an unfriendly stare.

‘Ain’t nothing for sale here,’ he growls. ‘You better leave now. I don’t like Red-Eyes in my shop and I ain’t too keen on their friends neither.’

When you continue looking around, the ogre reaches down and takes a large axe out from underneath the

counter.

‘Seems your hearing ain’t so good, Sightmaster. I hope you ain’t blind as well.’

If you decide to leave the shop, turn to **111**. If you want to ignore the ogre’s threats, turn to **193**.

49

Libra does not speak to you but you remember her words at your lodging house; I will not answer your prayers again until you have righted this wrong. You hear footsteps in the corridor outside and the door of the shrine is flung open. Turn to **119**.

50

The dogs howl and rush towards you. As the battle is joined, six of them disappear; they were just an illusion, designed to intimidate you. But you still face six angry Dog Men. You must fight two of them at the same time.

	SKILL	STAMINA
First DOG MAN	6	4
Second DOG MAN	7	5

If you win the battle, turn to **156**.

51

As the Shield Maidens advance, you throw the holy water in their faces. Apart from a momentary distraction, it appears to have no effect whatsoever. The warrior women may be dead but they are not intrinsically evil. Turn to **90**.

52

Jardakka looks at you and raises her eyebrows. ‘Time for some magic?’

You shake your head. ‘Magic is not the answer. That is why they put up with that obnoxious little Minimite, so a sorcerer can’t trick his way in there. We’ve got to use our heads on this one.’

Jardakka shrugs. ‘Or our sword arms. Why don’t we come back after dark and steal the mirror?’

‘You read my mind. That leaves us with some time to kill. We could go and find Fox or look around here and try to work out the best way to get in.’

‘Or we could see what tricks Hagbut has up his sleeve.’

If you want to look for Fox, turn to **12**. If you would rather use the remaining daylight to look around the area, turn to **120**. Or you may follow Jardakka’s suggestion and visit the shop of Hagbut the Gnome (turn to **201**).

53

The enraged snake bites the strongman, who is apparently unharmed. His partner holds up a small dark bottle so that the crowd can see it.

‘This is it, my masters, the miraculous Potion of Life! One dose renders the drinker proof against all poisons for the space of a month. A bottle can be yours for only five gold pieces!’

The crowd surges forward and the thin man is soon busy handing out bottles left, right and centre. If you wish to buy a potion from him, turn to **2**. If you would rather move on, turn to **159**.

54

The Shield Maiden falls without a murmur and you turn to defeat her sister in arms. But even before you have landed a blow, the dead woman seems to revive. She picks up her sword and scrambles to her feet, ready to continue the fight! You realise that these are no mortal enemies. If ever you needed Libra’s protection, it is now. Turn to **127**.

55

By the time the Mant falls, the portcullis gate has already closed. It can only be raised from inside the house – your way is barred.

You hear an angry clicking noise and turn to see two more Soldier Mants coming along the quay towards you. They must be the guards from the main entrance, attracted by the noise of the battle.

You realise that the whole house must now be awake and arming itself against the would-be intruders and that further attempts to enter will be hopeless. You turn and run away from the quay. Turn to **197**.



56

'For all I know they followed you here,' Hagbut cries, and bites his knuckles.

'Who?'

'The bone men. I told them you had it! Stupid! Stupid!'

Jardakka tries to calm him but the Gnome is no longer listening. He mutters something under his breath that sounds unpleasantly like an incantation.

You notice a movement in the mirror leaning against the wall of Hagbut's shop and grab the Red-Eye's sleeve. At the same moment, however, your reflection is preparing for battle. As Jardakka turns to see what you want, her reflection draws its sword and climbs out of the mirror to confront you.

'Courga! It cannot be!'

Your doubles advance upon you. You must fight yourself!

SIGHTMASTER SKILL * STAMINA *
With * use your current scores.

If you defeat your reflection, turn to 105.



57

Rowing in a galley is exhausting. The first day you think you will die. The second day is better but the muscles in your arms still feel like fire. Lose 3 STAMINA points (if your STAMINA was already less than 5, reduce your score to 2). Turn to 189.

58

Vasudevi pockets the coin and tells you how to join him in the boat. A narrow alley between the houses, no more than a slot of light between two dark walls, leads to a flight of steps down to the water's edge. Once you are onboard, the Svinn unties his craft and rows you down the canal.

The houses on either side of the canal

are larger than most of those you have seen in Krooe, with stone foundations that go straight down into the water. Many have water gates, where cargoes were once unloaded direct into basement storerooms, but, according to Vasudevi, these have long since fallen into disuse. The houses themselves are in poor condition; the plaster is flaking away from the walls, exposing the rotting timbers underneath. Windows are covered with sun-bleached cloth hangings or not at all, dark empty eye sockets in the bare walls. There are no signs of life. You could believe that most of the buildings are abandoned but Vasudevi shakes his head; many people live here, including the Witch of Krooe.

He steers his boat over to the water gate of a particularly dilapidated looking house. The dark corridor beyond is partially flooded and strewn with rubble. A flight of steps leads upwards into the house above.

'Is this the place?'

Vasudevi nods. As soon as you have disembarked, he pushes his boat back out into the middle of the canal; he is not keen to linger in this area and will not wait for you. It occurs to you that he might have cheated you by bringing you to a derelict house. The suspicion becomes more insistent once you have explored the rooms above; all are empty, the surfaces thick with grime and dust. There is nothing to suggest that anyone lives here at all, although a bundle of filthy rags in one room might indicate that vagrants occasionally spend the night within its walls.

On the ground floor, you find a door that opens onto the street that runs parallel to the canal on the other side of the house.

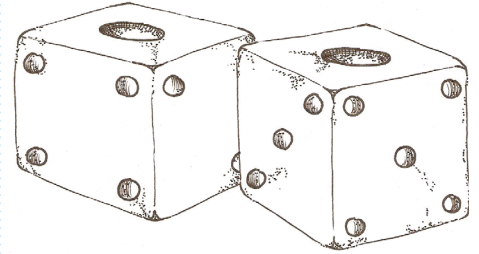
If you want to leave the house and walk down the street, turn to 95. If you would rather wait here in the hope that the witch returns, turn to 6.

59

The bone men are not convinced and demand to search you. Your protests that you cannot possibly be hiding a sword, let alone in your backpack, meet with stubbornness and

suspicion; now they are certain you have something to hide. They reach for their swords.

If you agree to let the bone men rummage through your possessions, turn to 112. If you would rather prepare for battle, turn to 16.



60

The girl screams as you grab hold of the mirror but she is strong and does not let go of it. You hear an angry hiss behind you, then a sharp pain in the back of your neck. Deduct 2 STAMINA points. You release your grip on the mirror, giving the girl the opportunity to open the door and leave the house with it.

You turn around to see Jardakka struggling with the Serpentine. The snake woman has blood dripping from her fangs and you realise that she must have bitten you.

If you have drunk the Potion of Life, turn to 107. Otherwise, turn to 168.

61

The doors open onto a large room in which a lamp is burning. The lamp stands on the edge of a large table almost completely covered with parchment scrolls. Your attention is drawn, however, to the two people looking at you in surprise and growing anger. Turn to 119.

62

The lightning bolt narrowly misses you and slams into the far wall, leaving a black scorchmark on the timbers. Jardakka leaps to her feet and draws her scimitar but, before she can use it, Madam Hun comes storming out of the kitchen, waving a meat cleaver.

'You know the rules! If anyone is going to spill blood in these four walls it's me!'

Jardakka pauses, then sheathes her weapon. Even a Red-Eye hesitates to pick a quarrel with the ogress. She sits down. Fox holds up his hands in a conciliatory gesture and you take your places again at the table.

Madam Hun shoots a warning glare at the three of you and stomps off. Turn to 136.



63

The arrow misses you and clatters harmlessly off the stone plinth. Turn to 195.

64

Although you walk around Krooe for hours you meet no one who can tell you where to find the witchwoman. The shadows lengthen in the little streets and you realise that you cannot waste any more time; night is falling. Reluctantly, you abandon your search and head back into the city centre. Turn to 7.

65

You creep back down to the great hall, where you find that your comings and goings have roused the occupants of the house. The double doors are thrown open, flooding the room with light. Turn to 119.

66

You leave the market and enter a maze of small streets. There are shops in the huts on either side. The shop to your left has iron bars across the windows; a bedraggled green wig hanging above the door advertises that it belongs to a dealer in magical artefacts. You push open the door and enter the shop. Turn to 131.



67

Jardakka appears at your side, brandishing her scimitar. It is too much for the priest of Slangg, who turns and runs away rather than face the pair of you alone. The Red-Eye looks down at the dead insect man with a mournful expression, as if she is sorry she missed the fight.

'So much for secrecy,' Jardakka mutters, shaking her blade at the windows opposite. The curious onlookers take the hint and hurriedly close their shutters. 'Well, we cannot leave him here. That priest may come back with the other guards.'

The door in the wall stands open, Jardakka having unbolted it from the inside. Together you drag the corpse in off the street. Turn to 221.

68

'Is that so? Well, don't trouble yourself further; just give us the money and we'll make sure Vik gets it. Isn't that so Barnacle?'

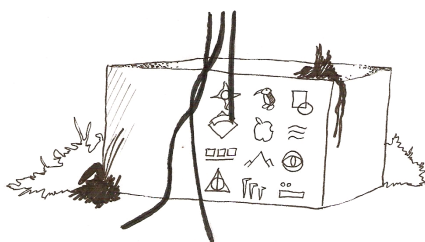
The creature holding you makes an unpleasant gurgling sound, which you take to be laughter.

If you agree to give the creatures all your remaining gold pieces, they allow you to continue on your way (turn to 46). If you have no money, or refuse to be intimidated, turn to 98.

69

The shop on the other side of the street sells equipment for adventurers travelling into the wilds of the Baddu Bak or the Shamutanti Hills. An open treasure chest by the front door displays a sample of the wares on offer inside; a faded backpack, a sword and a lantern.

If you want to enter the shop, turn to 48. If you would rather walk down the street, turn to 111.



70

The cloud of dust envelops you. You feel the dirt in your hair and clothes. It pours into your eyes, ears, nose and mouth, choking and blinding you. You are suffocating. It is as if you are being buried alive. Your adventure ends here.

71

The insect men stand aside and allow you past. You pass under the arch and enter the house. Directly ahead of you, a second archway opens onto a vast undercroft. The spaces between the stone pillars are piled high with crates and barrels, storage jars and bales of cloth. Just before the arch, a flight of stone steps leads upwards.

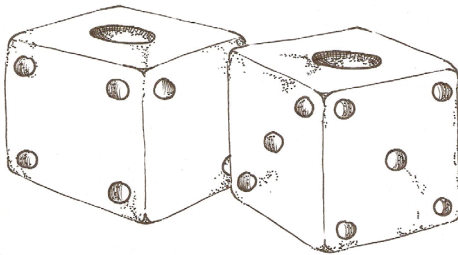
On one side of the entrance is the winch that raises and lowers the portcullis gate. Jardakka draws her scimitar and cuts through the rope with a single stroke, causing the gate to crash down. The Soldier Mants turn and click angrily but they cannot pursue you. You race up the steps and pull open the door at the top.

You find yourself in a lighted corridor on the ground floor of the house. There are doors to either side of the one through which you have just entered, and double doors in the wall opposite. Turn to 110.



72

The bed has not been slept in. The wooden chest by the door contains only folded clothes, but there are others. Before you can examine them, you hear footsteps in the corridor outside and the door of the bedchamber is flung open. Turn to 119.



73

With a cleaver, the farmer deftly chops one of the koorda fruit into smaller pieces and offers you a taste. It is delicious. The flesh is succulent but meaty and filling; a whole fruit would easily make a light meal. You may buy as many koorda fruit as you wish, at a cost of 1 Gold Piece each; when eaten, they will restore 2 STAMINA points. You may stop to eat at any point when you are not involved in a battle. Continue onwards by turning to 140.

74

The Serpentine fixes you with her unblinking stare. Her gaze is hypnotic and you feel an irresistible urge to tell the truth. Jardakka looks at you in horror as you speak honestly and openly, revealing all your plans. You cannot quite believe what you have done and ready yourself for the worst.

Enno the Minimate springs into the air, squeaking in alarm. 'I knew they were up to some mischief!'

The snake woman, however, appears thoughtful. 'The mirror is curssed? My master must hear of this.' Turn to 18.



75

The insect man sits on the floor, with his back resting against the column. As you thought, the Mant is dead; the black carapace is punctured by several deep wounds, from which a thick yellow blood has oozed. A second body lies a few metres away, partially hidden behind a column.

'Look out!' Jardakka pushes you to one side, just in time to avoid the arrow speeding towards you. The shaft buries itself deep in the chest of the dead insect man. Turn to 195.

76

The women do not reply. They either do not understand or are indifferent to your words. They start to close in on you. If you want to escape them, you will have to turn and jump out of the window (turn to 209). Otherwise, you must prepare yourself for battle. Because you face them unarmed, you must deduct 2 points from your Attack Strength in each round. Turn to 192.



77

As the Shield Maidens advance towards you, you see that the pale, beautiful faces have been replaced by grinning skulls. Jardakka's first blow causes her opponent to stagger and your heart surges; the shades can be harmed by normal weapons! You rush to join the battle.

SHIELD
MAIDEN

SKILL 8 STAMINA 6

If you are wounded during this battle, you will suffer only normal damage (lose 2 STAMINA points). If you defeat the shade, turn to 108.

78

'We don't have that kind of money, Hagbut,' you tell the gnome.

He shrugs and starts to wrap the blade again. What will you do next?

Take the sword by force?

Turn to 9.

Offer Hagbut something in exchange for the weapon?

Turn to 126.

Ask him whether he has anything cheaper?

Turn to 178.

79

The young man is watching the two girls cross the square and only reluctantly turns his eyes towards you. He has a blank, stupid face. He does not know where the Witch lives but calls back inside the house to ask his mother the same question. A plump, red-faced woman comes to the door and looks you up and down. 'The old sorceress? She lives down by the canal, that much I know, but if you want to find her you must ask Vasudevi, my husband. He has gone out to find work, or so he says; he is as idle as my son here. At this hour, the worthless wretch will doubtless be fishing down by the bridge. If you follow that street there you will come to it soon enough.'

You thank the woman for her advice and leave the square by the street she indicates. Turn to 205.





80

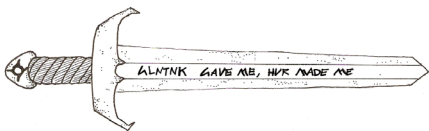
A galley from the Earth End coast is moored on the waterfront. Her captain, a swarthy elf with a black beard and a gold armlet, stands on the quay, watching as she is unloaded. The crew, a mixture of humanoid races, deposit the casks and bales on the quayside, where a steady stream of Worker Mants is going to and fro, carrying the goods across to the house on their backs. The insect men are engrossed in their work and pay you no attention.

A portcullis gate gives access to a storeroom beneath the house; the portcullis is raised, but the entrance is guarded by two Soldier Mants. Next to them hovers Enno the Minimite, Shar-kali-Sharri's steward, who is busy checking off the goods. You need to get past the Minimite and his guards without attracting their attention.

The first thought that occurs to you is to pick up one of the bales on the quayside and join the column of Worker Mants. If you carry the bale on your shoulder, you can use it to hide your face from the Minimite and simply walk into the the house. If you want to do this, turn to 17.

Another possibility would be to bribe the Black Elf captain to smuggle you into the house. If he lets you hide in an empty cask, the Worker Mants would carry you into the storeroom as cargo. If you decide to offer the captain a bribe, turn to 125.

'Or, we could create a diversion,' Jardakka grins. She blinks and you get a momentary glimpse of the fire behind her closed eyes. If you want to follow Jardakka's plan, turn to 188.



81

'What are you doing in my house?' the Cyclops roars. 'You better have a good excuse or by Libra I'll make you sorry for it.'

Quickly you explain that the antique

mirror Fox sold to him yesterday is under a dreadful curse. Every moment that it remains in his house puts him at great risk – particularly now that night has fallen.

Test your Luck. If you are Lucky, turn to 179. If you are Unlucky, turn to 223.

82

The Serpentine escorts you out of the great hall into the entrance corridor. As she opens the double doors, a young girl turns away quickly and limps towards a door at the far end of the corridor, which must lead to the garden of the house. The awkward movement suggests to you that she was eavesdropping outside the doors of the great hall until the moment before.

The girl is a cyclops. Despite her young age and the hunchback that makes her stoop like an old woman, she already stands fully as tall as you. You cannot help but stare after her. It is then that you notice that she carries the mirror of Itikar in her left hand.

The Serpentine gestures towards the front door, indicating that you should leave now.

If you want to try to snatch the mirror from the girl's hands, turn to 60. If you would rather leave the house, turn to 214.

83

You tell Enki that Vik's mark is a black sun. The old sorcerer nods and waves you to a position of honour at the stern. Although he stands next to you for much of the voyage up river he never once asks you about Vik or the nature of your friendship. Nor does he ask you why you are travelling to Lumlé. As a leading light in Khare's underworld, Vik's name is well known in the cityport and few dare to involve themselves in his business. Turn to 189.

84

The doors open onto the great hall of the house. It is in darkness, the only light coming from a large window in the wall to your left, through which the full moon is visible. Figures loom up out of the shadows and you are so tense that you are ready to cut them down until you realise that they are

only statues, part of Shar-kali-Sharri's extensive art collection.

There are two ways out of the great hall; a pair of double doors in the far wall, opposite those through which you entered, and a second, smaller door in the far left-hand corner. A glow beneath the double doors indicates that there is light in the room beyond.

If you want to stay and search for the mirror, turn to 162. Otherwise, you may leave the great hall through the double doors (turn to 61), or the small door to your left (turn to 227).



85

Hagbut is busy tidying his shop, which seems in even greater disarray than normal, and does not notice you enter. He jumps when he hears the shop door bang shut behind him and seems relieved when he looks up and sees your reflection in the large mirror.

'Ah, it's you again.' He turns. 'Have you come to buy that which should not be named?'

If you have 30 Gold Pieces and know what he is talking about, turn to 135. Otherwise, turn to 166.

86

You start suddenly, as if waking from a dream, and find yourself sitting on the floor of the first floor room overlooking the canal. Though the sky is still light, the sun has gone down beneath the roofs of the houses opposite and a chill has entered the house.

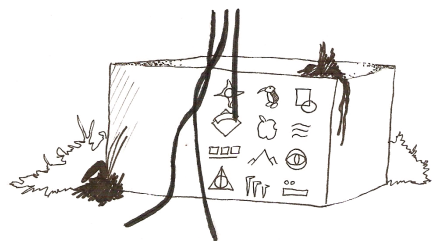
You hear footsteps approaching and a moment later Jardakka enters the room.

'Courga! What has happened to your eye?'

You put your hand up to your face; where your right eye was, there is only an empty socket, the wound already healed. You are not blind, but having only one eye means it is difficult for you to judge distances. Reduce your **SKILL** score by two points.

You tell Jardakka what has happened and what you still need to do. She agrees that you should go to the house of the merchant Shar-kali-Sharri and attempt to steal the mirror under the cover of darkness.

You get up and follow her downstairs. On the ground floor you pause to investigate a bundle of filthy rags but it is exactly what it appears to be. You leave the house and walk back towards the city centre, glad to be leaving Krooe. Turn to **7**.



87

You turn to Jardakka. 'I assume we're talking about our old friend Hagbut the gnome?'

Hagbut is a dealer in magical artefacts. If he doesn't have something, he usually knows where it can be found.

The Red-Eye rests her blind stare on you. 'No, not Hagbut. The Witch of Krooe.'

'The black sorceress? I thought she was dead.'

'Those old powers never die. The witchwoman will give us what we need.'

'Do you know where she lives?'

'Not exactly,' Jardakka admits. 'But we'll find her. Or she'll find us.'

If you agree to look for the Witch of Krooe, turn to **27**. If you would rather pay a visit to Hagbut the Gnome, turn to **194**.

88

'What are you waiting for?' Jardakka hisses. 'Smash the damned thing!'

Now you have the mirror in your hands you hesitate to follow the advice of the spirits. The goddess Libra said that the mirror must be returned to the tomb of Iltikar. Her words echo in your mind: I will not answer your prayers again until you have righted this wrong. If you break the glass, you will not be able to call on the goddess ever again.

'Are you crazy?' Jardakka demands. 'I don't see Lady Justice helping you now!'

If you want to go ahead and smash the mirror, turn to **148**. If you would rather obey Libra, turn to **213**.

89

Fox produces a pouch from inside his shirt and places it on the desk without a word. Vik raises an eyebrow. He reaches across and loosens the drawstrings, tipping out a slew of gold pieces on the dark wood.

'Go ahead and count them,' Fox says.

Vik holds up his hand, as if to decline. 'A bit of honour amongst thieves, eh?' He sits down again. 'Are your friends just here for support or have they brought me something as well?'

'Actually,' Jardakka says, 'we've come to ask your advice.'

Vik laughs. 'My advice?'

'About the Shield Maidens of Lumlé,' Fox says quickly. 'I've heard it said that you once defeated them.'

Vik stops laughing and looks at you strangely. 'Biggest gamble I ever took. It's a long time since I've told anyone that story.'

He takes up the pair of dice again and rolls them across the desktop.

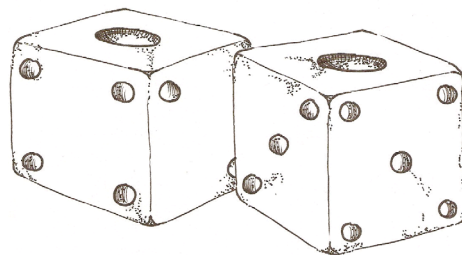
'I tell you what; we'll play a round of Snake Eyes. If you win, I'll tell you the story. If I win, I'll take your money. What is my advice worth to you? Shall we say three gold pieces?'

Jardakka shakes her head; she is not

willing to gamble on these terms.

If you want to play, you will have to stake 3 Gold Pieces of your own money.

If you want to play Snake Eyes, turn to **24**. If you don't have 3 Gold Pieces or don't want to gamble, turn to **174**.



90

The Shield Maidens advance towards you. While your weapons do no harm to the ghosts of the long-dead women, every wound you suffer is an icy, paralysing agony. Your adventure ends here.

91

The long tables inside the hall are crowded with labourers returning after a hard day unloading ships on Kharé's waterfront. No one pays any attention to you and Jardakka. You hand over your 2 Gold Pieces and receive in return a generous bowl of rice flavoured with hunks of fried fish. You take your place at one of the tables and spoon the food into your mouth until the bowl is licked clean.

If you had not eaten at all today, you were extremely hungry and the meal is just enough to keep your strength up. If you have already eaten, it provides additional energy – restore 3 **STAMINA** points.

Jardakka pushes away her bowl. 'What now?' she asks.

You look at the labourers sitting next to you but they are engrossed in their own conversations. One possibility would be to go to the house of Shar-kali-Sharri and attempt to steal the mirror under the cover of darkness. On the other hand, it might be better to find Fox first; there is strength in numbers.

If you want to raid the house of the merchant, turn to **47**. If you would rather go to Fox's house, turn to **121**.

92

Jardakka agrees to take the first watch. While you bed down on the floor, she squats against one wall, her sword resting across her knees.

You are exhausted and fall asleep almost at once – restore 2 STAMINA points. Your rest is brief; it seems that you have scarcely closed your eyes before Jardakka is shaking you awake. Turn to 176.

93

The inside of the shop is cluttered with equipment of all kinds, most of it used; a faded backpack, a rusty lamp and a notched sword that looks like it has already seen more battles than you ever will. A big OGRE leans on the counter; the shopkeeper is talking to another of his kind, a boatman to judge by the anchor tattooed on his hairy forearm. The conversation stops as you enter and the shopkeeper turns to ask you what you want. The Ogre takes a wooden box down from one of the shelves and throws it roughly onto the counter.

‘There you are, beeswax candles. One gold piece each.’

The following items might also be useful:

A throwing knife	5 Gold Pieces
A coil of rope	3 Gold Pieces
A leather water bottle	1 Gold Piece

The throwing knife can be used at the start of any battle. Roll two dice; if the total is equal to or less than your SKILL score, the knife hits your opponent and inflicts 2 STAMINA points of damage. When you have bought what you want, you leave the shop. Jardakka is waiting for you in the street outside. Turn to 111.

94

The JIB-JIB begins a dreadful howling that must be audible right across the garden. Jardakka menaces the creature with her scimitar but it runs away quickly, causing the shrubs on either side to sway. You see lanterns being lit in the house.

If you want to continue towards the house, turn to 8. If you would rather

abandon the attack, you may run back to the wall and let yourself out through the back gate. Turn to 197.



95

The houses become fewer as you walk, the street wider; eventually you reach the banks of the Jabaji, the great river that flows through the middle of Kharé. Although the sight is disheartening, as it means you have left Krooe without finding the witch, the fresh breeze coming off the water is very welcome after the stifling air of the slums and you are reluctant to head back into the maze of alleys and courtyards.

While you are deliberating, your nose catches the smell of food and you realise how hungry you are. An ugly fellow with a protruding lower jaw and yellow teeth is grilling fish cakes over an open fire. The MAN-ORC looks up as you approach.

‘1 gold piece each,’ he tells you.

If you want to buy a fish cake from him, turn to 19. If you have a koorda fruit and would rather eat that, turn to 157. If you decide not to eat anything, turn to 215.

96

As the bronze blade pierces your flesh, you feel a pain like no other you have ever experienced before. It is as if your flesh was burning slowly in an icy fire. Your limbs become numb and heavy. Deduct 1 SKILL and 2 STAMINA points.

If you want to call on the goddess Libra for help, turn to 127. If you would rather fight on, turn back to 192. Each time a Shield Maiden wounds you, you will lose 1 SKILL and 2 STAMINA points.

97

The door opens on a large room with a closed and shuttered window in the wall to your left. The room is in darkness but the light from the corridor is sufficient to show that it contains a four poster bed and that the bed is occupied. Luckily, it seems that the sleeper has not been woken by your entrance as he or she does not move.

If you want to search the bedchamber, turn to 187. If you would rather close the door quietly again, turn to 29.

98

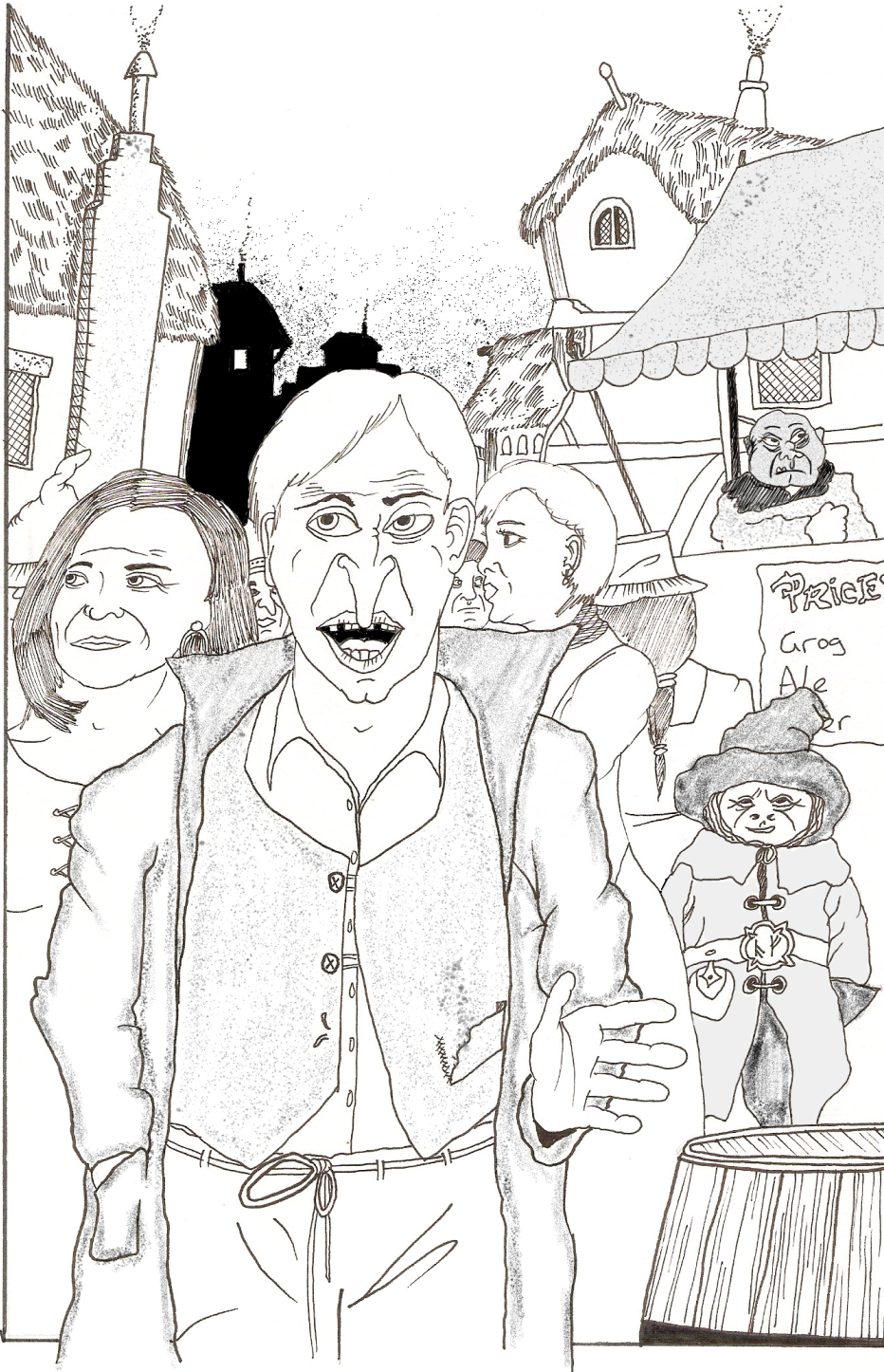
Jardakka’s eyes flash open and a jet of flame burns one of the rubbery limbs holding her fast. All the tentacles draw back, allowing you both to get free, but in the next moment the WATER TROLL lashes out angrily. A tentacle hits Jardakka in the face, sending her crashing back against the wall of the alley. The Red-Eye falls to the ground, stunned, leaving you to fight the two creatures alone. You must fight them both at the same time.

	SKILL	STAMINA
GOAT-FISH	6	6
WATER TROLL	7	9

During the battle the Water Troll will try to wrap its tentacles around you. If you lose an Attack Round, a tentacle grabs you, restricting your movement, and you must deduct 1 point from your Attack Strength in the following round. If you lose this round as well, a second tentacle grabs you and you must deduct 2 points in the following round and so on (the Troll has four tentacles). However, if you succeed in wounding the Troll all the tentacles release you and you may ignore any penalty you have incurred.

If you defeat both creatures, turn to 211.





99

Snitch smiles and starts to push through the crowd towards you.

‘Oh, I am glad to meet you, my friends. I have not seen you for a long time; have you perhaps been on some daring adventure? But of course you were! Did you find a great treasure?’

Jardakka snorts at that but Snitch misunderstands her meaning. He starts to speak quickly, his voice becoming a whine.

‘Ah, if I had only met you yesterday I should not have troubled you but the

Wheel of Fortune has turned against me. Will you lend poor Snitch a Gold Piece to buy food? I swear you shall have it back tenfold when my luck turns.’

You will have to give Snitch at least one gold piece to get rid of him. If you don’t have any money he will keep pestering you until you give him one piece of your equipment. If you are unable or unwilling to give him even this, he will make your life a misery until you manage to shake him off - lose 1 LUCK point. Turn to 66.

If you would rather offer him 2 Gold

Pieces in exchange for information, turn to 23.

100

You run off down the street. Behind you, the merchant Shar-kali-Sharri leans out of the window and, in a loud voice, calls upon Libra to bring the full weight of justice crashing down upon the heads of those who have robbed him. For now, his rage is in vain; you run on, letting yourself be swallowed up by the tangle of dark streets behind the harbour district. Only when you are certain that you are not being followed do you come to a halt. A full moon hangs in the southern sky, reminding you that your danger is far from over. You must take the mirror to the Queen of Shades before her Shield Maidens return. Turn to 113.

101

You bring your quarterstaff down on the head of the nearest dog, crushing his skull. The others howl and rush towards you. You must fight one of the five.

DOG MAN SKILL 7 STAMINA 5

If you win the battle, turn to 156.

102

The door opens! You slip through and Jardakka bolts it behind you. Turn to 221.

103

The old woman grabs your hand as if she were drowning. Before you know what is happening, she leans forward and bites deeply into your thumb, drawing blood. Lose 2 STAMINA points. She sucks greedily on the wound until you shove her away in disgust.

She laughs and wipes her bloody mouth with the back of her hand. A change seems to come over her in that moment. She remains as dirty and filthy as she was before, but the lines have disappeared from her face and she looks twenty years younger. The Witch of Krooe laughs.

‘Do you fear me, Sightmaster? The powers I serve are far more terrible. They will tell you whatever you want but at a price. There is always a price to pay.’

'What price is that?'

'That is for the spirits to decide. The spirits take what they want from those who call upon them.'

'Will they tell me how to defeat the Shield Maidens of Lumlé?'

'If that is what you wish to know.'

If you want to ask the witch to summon her spirits, turn to **161**. If you would rather not enter into a bargain with dark powers, turn to **22**.

104

Jardakka turns her fiery gaze upon you.

'Hey! We don't know he cheated us. Let's not start fighting each other. We've got to work together if we're going to beat this curse.'

After a tense moment, Jardakka's anger subsides and her eyes close. Cheechak jumps down onto her shoulder and she reaches up to pet the animal. Turn to **136**.

105

Your double disappears as you kill it. Jardakka is still fighting with her reflection. Hagbut has made a big mistake by summoning another Red-Eye; their eyes are wide open and fireballs are flying across the room. One strikes a glass bottle, which shatters, splashing a purple liquid across the wall and floor of the shop. The potion catches fire at once. The anguished gnome struggles to put the flames out but succeeds only in setting the sleeves of his robes alight. Seeing that everything is going against him, he slips a green ring onto his finger and disappears.

You hear a groan behind you and turn to see Jardakka cut down her reflection – or the reflection kill Jardakka; you are no longer sure which is which. As you stare at the victor, the fire runs along a shelf of magical items, setting off several small explosions. An acrid green smoke begins to spread through the room, making you cough. Soon the whole shop will be engulfed in flames.

If you want to stay and steal what

you can, turn to **152**. If you would rather leave the shop at once, turn to **7**.

106

In the gloom you fail to notice a shimmering black circle that lies like a shadow on the ground between the trees. By the time you see the deeper darkness it is too late and your next step takes you into the circle.

There is a blaze of light and you find yourself in a sunlit room. Blinking in the sudden brightness, it takes you a while to register your surroundings. The first thing you see is a SOLDIER MANT holding the shrieking monkey by the scruff of its neck. The insect man throws Cheechak down and reaches for the swords at its belt. Before you can react to this danger, you hear the buzzing of wings and Enno the Minimate flits into your field of view.

'You!' the Minimate squeaks and flies up towards the high ceiling of the room, which you now see is a great hall filled with statues. Somehow you have stumbled into Shar-kali-Sharri's house in Kharé!

A black circle on the wall behind you offers a quick escape but, as you step through the portal, the insect man lunges at you with his swords – lose 2 STAMINA points.

You reappear on the island of Nilgiri, closely followed by the Mant. The insect man halts its attack, confused by the sudden change in its surroundings. You seize the chance to attack the creature.

SOLDIER MANT SKILL 7 STAMINA 10

The Mant will fight both you and Jardakka at the same time. Conduct your battle as normal. Each Attack Round, roll 1 die to see if Jardakka has wounded the creature – if you roll a 5 or 6, you may deduct 2 additional STAMINA points.

If you win, turn to **39**.

107

You start to have difficulty breathing. A feeling of weakness washes over you and you slump to the floor.

You were conned! The Potion of Life has no effect! Your head reels and everything goes black.

Your adventure ends here.

108

The ghostly figures lying at your feet fade and vanish; their mortal remains are lying in a tomb in distant Lumlé. Jardakka stretches out her hand to you – she is wounded and bloody but alive. You are both alive! Turn to **200**.

109

As you approach, the Klattamen stop their assault and turn to face you. The Svinn leaps up, apparently unhurt, and grabs a sword from the ground. But instead of attacking the Klattamen, he attacks you! You have fallen into a trap set by ROBBERS. Two of them attack you at the same time.

	SKILL	STAMINA
KLATTAMAN	7	8
MAN-ORC	6	6

If you defeat them both, turn to **216**.

110

There are entrances at both ends of the corridor and doors in the walls on either side. The mirror must be somewhere in the house, you just have to find it without waking Shar-kali-Sharri and the rest of his household. There are ornate double doors in the centre of one wall; opposite these are three plainer doors, arranged in a row. The only noise is a rattling sound, which seems to come from behind the first of these doors, the door to the left. Which door will you open?

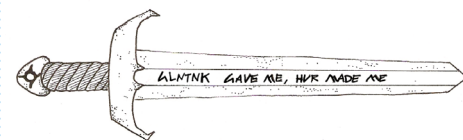
The double doors? Turn to **84**.

Or one of the doors in the wall opposite?

The door on the left? Turn to **199**.

The middle door? Turn to **134**.

The door on the right? Turn to **36**.



111

Jardakka looks at you. ‘OK, what now?’

If you think you should pay the merchant Shar-kali-Sharri a visit, turn to 163. If you want to find Fox, turn to 12. If you would rather look for the witch of Krooe, turn to 27.

112

The stubborn persistence of the bone men is equalled only by the narrow-mindedness with which they carry out their orders. When they have satisfied themselves that you do not have the sword of Glantanka after all, they lose all interest in you and your possessions and turn their attention back to Snitch. His protestations cut no ice with the bone men, who arrest him for providing false information. You are not overly sorry to see the informer marched away between the two skeletons, his arms held tight in their bony grip. You are now free to enter the house. Turn to 31.

113

The Shield Maidens do not return in the night, though your sleep is no less uneasy for that. Early the following morning, you go to the port and ask after ships bound for Lake Lumlé. The only vessel sailing up river is a fishing boat named the *Mermaid*. She is neither the fastest nor the most sweet-smelling craft moored in Kharé but you have little choice if you wish to leave at once. Boarding the ship, you ask passage of her captain.

Master Enki is a crusty old sorcerer who smells of fish. He tells you that the journey to Lake Lumlé will take two days, most of it under oars against the current.

‘I could do with two extra rowers. It’s no work for weaklings but I’ll feed you well for your labours.’ He looks at you with a calculating eye. ‘Or I can take you as passengers for a small fee.’ Enki will accept 4 Gold Pieces or an item that can be used for working spells (such as beeswax).

If you want to enlist as rowers, turn to 57. If you would rather pay your way, turn to 189. Or you may tell Enki you are friends of Vik in the hope of travelling for free (turn to 137).

114

Vik smiles. ‘The dice have decided. Very well.’ He settles back in his chair and starts to tell his story.

‘Some years ago, when I was just starting out in this business, a slaver galley came into port with half the crew dead or missing. The survivors blamed their misfortune on a young boy they had taken captive on the shores of Lake Lumlé, saying he was possessed by a devil. Of course, no one would buy him or the other slaves and the captain, then one of my closest rivals, was faced with utter ruin.

I bought the boy. It was simply good business; such fearless gestures do not go unnoticed. My star began to rise and soon eclipsed those of my rivals. But I admit that I was also curious. I invited the luckless captain to share my table and persuaded him to tell me the real story.

He said he was being persecuted by ghosts from old Lumlé, shield maidens who visited him every night and killed one of his crew. It was his belief that the boy belonged to them in some way; perhaps he had been dedicated to their service, or was merely their descendant. It is said that some of the lake villagers still carry the blood of that ancient race. Certainly this young boy had the proud features of a king.

Soon after I bought him, the shield maidens started killing my servants, beginning with the man I had sent to do the deal. So I asked the priest of Slangg what I should do. He advised me to buy a beeswax candle – nothing more – which he would then use in the performance of certain rites. When these had been concluded, I was to burn it. This I did, and I was never troubled by the shield maidens ever again – and nor was the captain. He still thanks me for his salvation.’

Vik laughs at the memory.

‘What happened to the boy?’

Vik shrugs. ‘I kept him for a little while, then sold him on. I do not know what became of him.’

‘So if we want to stop the shield

maidens, we must burn a candle?’ Jardakka asks.

‘Of beeswax. And the proper rituals must be completed first.’

‘I believe it was a spell of exorcism,’ Fox puts in. ‘It is no great magic – I could work it myself.’

‘Then we’ll find you a beeswax candle,’ Jardakka says. ‘In all Kharé, there must be at least one.’

If you are given an option to ask about magical artefacts, deduct 101 from the reference you are on and turn to the new reference to ask for a beeswax candle. Now turn to 174.

115

The Goat-fish spits on the ground. ‘Vik doesn’t need the services of anyone who lets themselves be caught so easily.’ Turn to 98.

116

The wall turns a corner and runs along a side street. Some way down there is a small door that opens out onto the street. You try the handle but of course it is bolted from the inside. The door is of a sturdy construction, oak wood reinforced by iron nails, and breaking it down would almost certainly alert the inhabitants of the houses opposite.

You look round and see a man watching you from the shadows on the other side of the street. He wears a cowl that hides his face but his robes are enough to tell you that he is a priest of Slangg, the god of malice. When he realises that you have seen him, he slips around the street corner and vanishes. What will you do?

Climb over the wall? Turn to 207.
Hide and wait to see what happens? Turn to 25.
Continue down to the waterfront? Turn to 80.

117

The dust swirls in agitation. ‘Give us your eye or we will destroy you!’

If you want to give up your right eye, turn to 86. If you are ready to fight the spirits, turn to 43.

118

Snitch looks around warily, as if he expects Fox to be hiding nearby.

'If I were you, I wouldn't trust your friend the sorcerer. He is a lotus eater.'

You know that the lotus flower is sometimes used by sorcerers to induce a trance-like state. But long-term use dulls the brain and rots the body and, as a consequence, the nobles of Kharé have issued an edict, forbidding the drug to be sold in the city – an edict that is widely flouted.

'Rumour has it that he owes Vik a large sum of money for the drug, money that he is unable or unwilling to pay back. When you left the city suddenly, it was widely assumed that Fox had gone to ground. Now Vik has put a price on his head so large that every low life in the city will be looking for him.'

You thank Snitch for the warning and give him the promised 2 Gold Pieces. He pockets the coins and disappears into the crowd. Turn to 66.



119

You are confronted by an unlikely looking couple.

One is a giant, easily nine feet tall, with a single eye in the middle of his forehead. The CYCLOPS holds an iron poker in front of him like a weapon.

The woman by his side has the arms and head of a Human female but the long sinuous body of a serpent. She holds her body upright, like a cobra poised to strike, but her long tail trails across the floor behind her. Even her head is not fully human because she has the large yellow eyes and pointed fangs of a snake. Will she recognise you?

If you have met the Serpentine before, turn to 223. If this is your first meeting, turn to 81.

120

You start by walking along the length of the garden wall. The wall is too high for you to get a clear view into the grounds but you can see the tops of ornamental trees above the stone parapet. If necessary, it should be possible to climb over the wall without too much difficulty, although you would be in full view of the houses opposite.

The wall turns a corner and runs along a side street. Some way down there is a small door that opens out onto the street. You try the handle but it is bolted from the inside. There are no guards here, but the door is of a sturdy construction, oak wood reinforced by iron nails, and breaking it down would be both noisy and time consuming. You watch the door for half an hour but nobody goes in or out.

The wall turns another corner. Eventually the street you are following brings you back to the Jabaji. One wing of the house faces directly onto the river, where the merchant has his own private quay. You stroll along the waterfront. A galley from the Earth End coast is just coming into dock and you stop and watch as she moors. A city official is also there, ready to make sure that the cargo is accurately inventoried – or to pocket a bribe to overlook something. Sea-borne goods are offloaded in Kharé onto smaller boats for the onward journey to Lake Lumlé and both the city and its merchants make a considerable profit from customs duties.

You listen to the official without interest; your real interest is in the house behind you. A portcullis gate gives access to the storerooms beneath the house, but it is heavily guarded by Soldier Mants. As you watch, Enno the Minimate comes out of the house and flies towards the official; you have no wish to be seen by him and leave the waterfront quickly. Turn to 7.

121

Fox lives on the north bank of the Jabaji, in an area inhabited mostly by Red-Eyes. The streets are still busy despite the late hour and Jardakka exchanges greetings with some of those passing by. The creatures are generally unfriendly towards outsiders and you are glad that Jardakka is with you. Fox himself was harrassed by the Red-Eyes when he first moved in, but the inevitable confrontation taught them a healthy respect for the sorcerer. One of the young thugs, Jardakka, even joined his small group of adventurers.

As you approach the house, you see that a small crowd has gathered in the street outside. Two soldiers wearing the black livery of the Third Noble stand at the entrance. It is said that the Third Noble of Kharé is a Vampire and that there are no living men in his service. The soldiers are talking to a small man with a long, pointed nose, whom you recognise as Snitch, a notorious informer who will betray anyone for money. Snitch is shaking so hard that you could easily believe him their prisoner rather than their informant.

If you want to find out what is going on, turn to 204. If you would rather keep walking down the street, turn to 40.



122

The Svinn is older than you first thought. His eyes are sunken, his hair a few white strands plastered to his skull. He looks at you fearfully when you mention the witch. He reaches forward and takes hold of your arm, though his grip is weak.

‘Keep well away from that devil,’ he says, his voice wavering. ‘The price she asks is too high.’

You start to draw back, realising that you will get no useful information from him.

‘You think me a scared old fool, eh? How old do you think I am? Sixty? Seventy? But I have seen only twenty summers. The witch took my youth in return for her help, though it has availed me little.’

If you want to follow the old man’s advice to have nothing to do with the witch, you decide to return to the city centre, where you may visit either the merchant (turn to **163**) or Hagbut the gnome (turn to **201**), or look for Fox (turn to **12**). If you would rather continue your search for the Witch of Krooe, turn to **226**.

123

Queen Iltikar lies in her sarcophagus, her empty hands folded across her skeletal ribs. The skull stares sightlessly back at you. You wonder if the spirit of the dead queen is aware that you are about to replace her lost treasure.

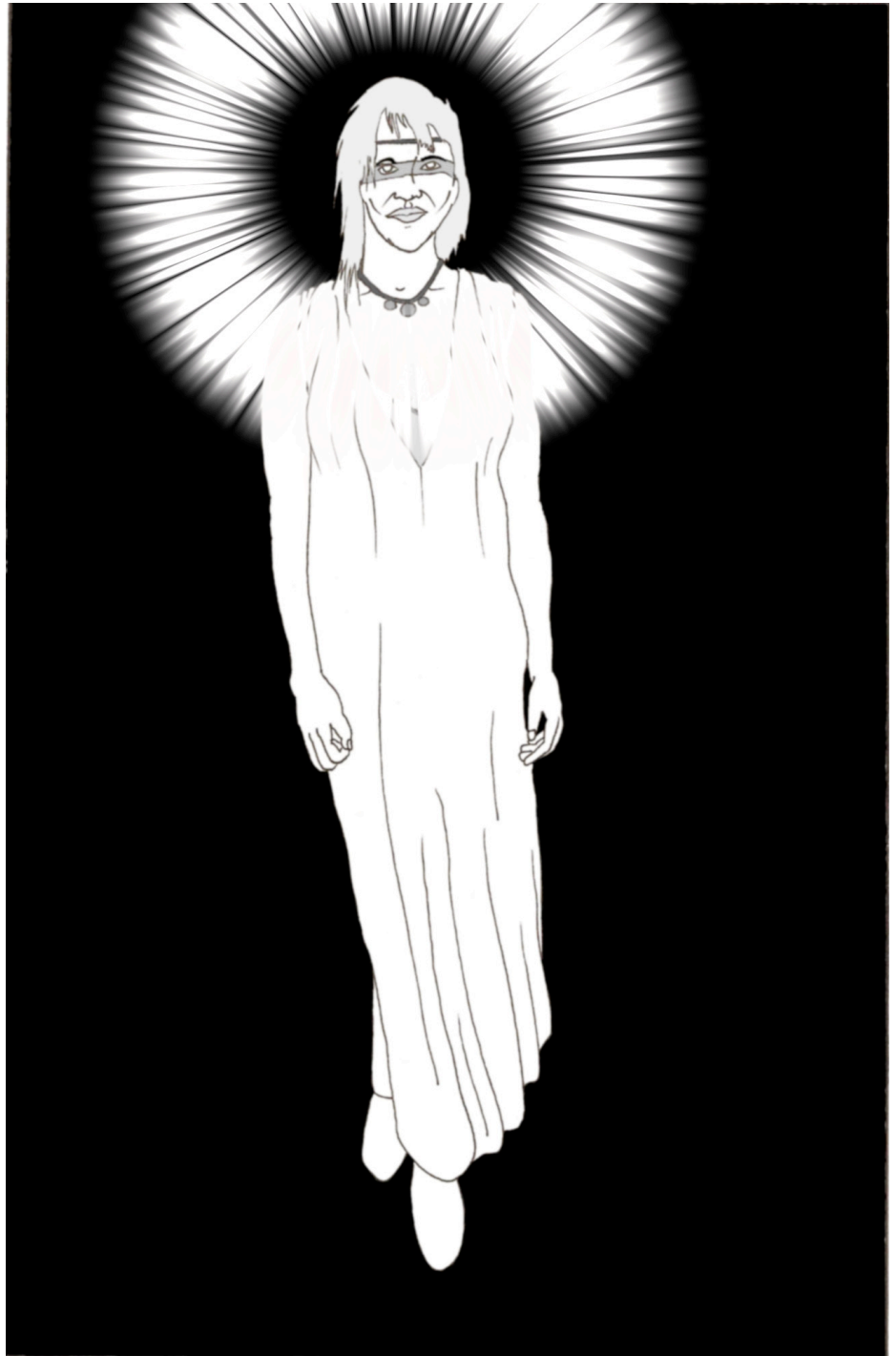
As you take the mirror from your backpack, you hear a hiss behind you. In the next moment, an arrow comes speeding out of the darkness.

Test your Luck. If you are Lucky, turn to **63**. If you are Unlucky, turn to **160**.

124

You recognise the hunchback and limping gait and run quickly after the supposed servant. The girl turns as you rest a hand on her shoulder; she recognises you too and her eye widens in fear. ‘What do you want?’ she whispers, almost too terrified to speak.

If you threaten to kill her unless she gives you the mirror, turn to **15**. If you



would rather try to calm her, turn to **183**.

125

The Black Elf bows respectfully as you approach, according to his custom. You perform awkward little bows in return and whisper your plan to him.

He stares at you for a moment, then suggests that you come on board his ship to discuss the matter further.

‘You are most fortunate, honourables,’ he says. ‘As fate wills it, I am carrying two stone statues, a gift from my master to the noble Shar-kali-Sharri.’

He points out two coffin-like crates in the ship’s hold; the statues must be life-size. ‘They are extremely heavy and my men would gladly carry you in their place.’

The captain strokes his beard. ‘But you must understand that there is no little risk to me. Already my heart beats faster at the thought of the cruel punishments that await should you be discovered. Five of your Gold Pieces may help me to forget them for a while.’

If you want to offer the captain 5 Gold Pieces, turn to **35**. Otherwise, you may either pick up one of the bales

and carry it into the house (turn to 17), or attempt to create a diversion (turn to 188).

126

Hagbut looks through your meagre possessions with a critical eye.

If you have a bracelet of bone, turn to 158. If not, you may either attempt to steal the sword (turn to 9), or ask Hagbut if he has anything cheaper (turn to 178).

127

As you stumble over the words of the prayer, a light appears and grows stronger, becoming almost unbearably bright. The Shield Maidens pale before it like stars at the break of day; when you can see clearly again they have disappeared. In their place stands a tall, slender woman, glowing in the darkness like a candle flame. The goddess of justice looks at you sadly.

‘Shall justice reward injustice? Shall a wrong be judged right because it is done in my name? No, it cannot be. I am come only because you know not what you have done, which is itself an injustice. Nobody should be punished for crimes of which they are not aware. Two days ago, you entered the house of Iltikar and took that which did not belong to you. Your present danger is the result of that theft.

You should know that the queen was deeply beloved by her people. When she died, her Shield Maidens willingly drank poison, praying that they might be allowed to guard her through all eternity. The goddess Lunara granted their wish, though their shades may only walk under the light of her moon. Each night they will return to haunt you until you have restored to Iltikar what is rightfully hers.’

Libra begins to fade.

‘If you would have my favour and protection, take the mirror of Iltikar back to her house. I will not answer your prayers again until you have righted this wrong.’

Turn to 180.

128

Although you search the room carefully, using one of the candles to light your way, you do not find the mirror. If you want, you may take one or both of the beeswax candles, pinching out the flame and stashing them in your backpack and/or using one of them to light your way round the darkened house.

Before you can do anything else, you hear footsteps in the corridor outside and the door of the shrine is flung open. Turn to 119.

129

Your sixth sense wakes you from sleep, just in time to see a sword stabbing downwards. Instinctively, you roll to one side, but you are not quite quick enough to avoid the thrust. Roll 1 die.

ROLL RESULT

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1~2 | The sword pierces your shoulder – deduct 1 SKILL and 2 STAMINA points |
| 3~4 | The sword enters your side – deduct 4 STAMINA points |
| 5~6 | The sword merely grazes your arm – deduct 1 STAMINA point |

Your cry of pain raises the sleeping Jardakka. If you are still alive, turn to 176 to face your assailants.

130

The MINIMITE flies towards you and introduces himself as Enno, Shar-kali-Sharri’s steward. He asks who you are and whether you have an appointment.

‘But of course you don’t,’ he squeaks crossly. ‘What makes you think my lord has time to see every hanger-on who turns up at his door unannounced?’

The little man’s imperious tone and habit of flitting to and fro is already beginning to annoy you. You tell him forcefully that Shar-kali-Sharri will want to make time to see you, as you have come about a matter dear to his heart; the mirror of Iltikar.

The Minimite gives an offended sniff but condescends to admit you to the house.

‘However, I must insist that you leave your weapons with the guards. No one is permitted to bear arms in my lord’s house unless they are in his service. You may have them back when you leave.’

If you agree to hand over your quarterstaff, turn to 185. If you don’t want to give up your weapon, you will be refused admittance to the house. Turn to 52.

131

At first glance there appears to be no one in the shop, although it is far from empty. The room is crowded with curios, some piled up on shelves, others hanging from the ceiling. A large mirror leans against the wall to your left.

As you are looking around, a small bearded man emerges from amongst the clutter.

‘Well, well, well, look who it is,’ the GNOME says, recognizing you at once. ‘The deadly Jardakka and the Sightmaster. All Eyes and Shut Eye. Are you buying or selling today?’

‘Buying. We have a big problem.’

Hagbut rubs his hands in anticipation. ‘Big problems require expensive solutions. Tell me what you need.’

If you are looking for a specific artefact, turn to that reference now. Otherwise, you tell Hagbut you need something to fight ghosts (turn to 210).

132

You hear footsteps approaching in the corridor outside. Pausing only to wrap the mirror in some of the clothes, you shove it quickly into your backpack. In the next moment, someone knocks on the closed door and a silky voice asks after Leilana.

Thinking quickly, Jardakka drags the heavy chest in front of the door, just in time to stop the person outside from opening it. The response is immediate; there is a furious hammering at the door and another voice demands that whoever is inside open it at once.

The door is the only one in the room. You rush over to the window and throw open the shutters.

If you have a coil of rope, you can tie it to one of the bedposts and climb down into the street (turn to 100). Otherwise, you will have to risk jumping (turn to 10).

133

The dull plop! of the stone in the water wakes the fisherman. The MAN-ORC sits up suddenly, almost losing his hat overboard in the process. When he realises there is no fish on his line, he looks up at you, shading his eyes against the light.

‘Ha, had old Vasudevi fooled, didn’t you?’

You ask him if he knows where you can find the Witch of Krooe. He smiles, an ugly, gap-toothed grin.

‘That I might. For a gold piece, I’ll even take you there.’

If you want to throw a coin down to him, turn to 58. If you would rather continue on your way, turn to 155.

134

The door is unlocked and opens onto a flight of stone steps leading downwards. At the bottom, you find yourself in the undercroft beneath the house, where an archway opens onto a vast storeroom. The spaces between the stone pillars are piled high with crates and barrels, storage jars and bales of cloth. On the other side an arch opens directly onto the waterfront by the river Jabaji but it is sealed by a portcullis gate. Several Mants stand outside on the quay and click in agitation when they see you but the portcullis can only be raised from the inside. You run back up the steps to the corridor on the ground floor. Turn back to 110.

135

Hagbut beams when he sees the gold. ‘I must admit, I did not expect you two to come up with the money. Still, as the sage says, even the costliest jewel may be found in a dung heap, begging your pardon.’

‘What sage was it who said that little men should keep their mouths shut

if they don’t want to become even shorter?’ Jardakka asks.

‘A wise man, no doubt,’ Hagbut says hurriedly. Without bothering to count the money, he presses the sword of Glantanka into your hands, as if he was glad to be rid of it.

Jardakka takes the sword and feels its weight, cutting the air with the blade.

‘But I should keep it wrapped until you need it,’ Hagbut says, laughing nervously. ‘You wouldn’t want to go attracting the wrong sort of attention.’

Jardakka grunts and wraps the blade in its cloth cover.

‘And if anyone asks, I never sold it to you,’ the Gnome adds.

Jardakka takes the sword, as she is more familiar with swordplay. You leave the shop and continue on your way. Turn to 7.

136

‘Truce?’ Fox asks.

Jardakka nods, but the atmosphere around the table remains uneasy. It falls to you to try to broker the peace.

‘So where does this Shar-kali-Sharri live? Down by the river? Why don’t we go over there now, all three of us, and get the mirror back?’

‘You think he will give it to you just like that?’ Jardakka scoffs. ‘And if he does; what then? If we take the mirror back to Iltikar’s tomb, we will have risked our lives for nothing!’

‘Our lives won’t be worth much when the shield maidens return. I tell you, they are not of this world!’

‘So? Then we’ll use magic against them.’

Fox smiles thinly. ‘Your faith in my powers is touching, my dear, but not even I can lift a curse laid by the moon goddess herself.’

The Red-Eye shakes her head. ‘I’m not talking about you, sly Fox. This city is awash with amulets and magic potions; I say we get ourselves some powerful juju and blow those witches

back to hell!’

Fox folds his hands. ‘Do what you want, Jardakka. I’m going to see Vik. While I’m there, I’ll ask him about our curse. If memory serves me right, he has had trouble with these shield maidens before. He’ll give us some good advice.’

‘Or cut our throats for us,’ Jardakka mutters.

What do you think? If you want to pay the merchant a visit, turn to 163. If you would rather rely on magic, turn to 87. If you think you should go with Fox to ask Vik’s advice, turn to 222.

137

‘Friends of Vik, eh?’ Enki looks at you shrewdly. ‘In that case you’ll know his mark.’

Vik’s mark was painted on his door. If you know what it is, convert the letters to numbers using the muster A=1, B=2, C=3 and turn to the reference that corresponds to the total.

If you do not know what the symbol is, or if the paragraph you turn to makes no sense, turn to 224.

138

The Serpentine holds her head in her hands in anguish as the first sword blow cuts your makeshift weapon in two. Turn to 11.

139

Snitch is already running away down the street; the informer knows better than to wait around to face your anger.

‘We’ll catch up with him,’ Jardakka promises grimly.

She turns and shouts at the curious onlookers, threatening them with another display of violence unless they disperse. The young Red-Eyes drift away in ones and twos, muttering amongst themselves.

You look down at the fallen skeletons. The Third Noble will not be happy that you have killed his men. You have made a new and powerful enemy.

‘What shall we do about the bodies?’



you ask, nudging the pile of bones with the toe of your boot.

'Graveyard rubbish,' Jardakka sneers. 'Leave it for the dogs. I'm more concerned to find out what they've done with Fox.'

You call the sorcerer's name but there is no reply. The house in front of you is dark and silent.

If you want to go inside, turn to 31. If you would rather leave the area quickly, turn to 167.

140

A large crowd has gathered around two men, a thin fellow and a bare-chested, muscular strongman. The latter holds venomous snakes in each hand. As you approach, he seems to be encouraging a cobra to bite him.

If you want to stop and find out what is going on, turn to 53. If you would rather keep walking, turn to 225.

141

As you move, the warrior women start to advance again. You just have time to grab your quarterstaff before they are upon you. You must fight

them. Turn to 192.

142

The noise of the battle has not gone unnoticed. 'Help!' someone cries out, 'thieves are murdering old Aku!'

You look at Jardakka, then at yourself. Both of you are covered in blood.

'We'd better get out of here,' she says.

If you want to stay behind and loot the shop, turn to 38. If you would rather leave at once, turn to 111.

143

If you were wounded during the battle, the Pestilence has infected you with its wasting sickness. From now on, you must deduct 3 STAMINA points each time you are wounded rather than the usual two.

Giving the hideous corpse a wide berth you continue on your way. Turn to 64.

144

When Fox left Madam Hun's tavern, he told you he was going to see Vik. The name is well known to you but, as a leading light in Kharé's underworld, Vik is not a man to be found easily. You do know that he traffics in slaves and you decide to begin your search for the sorcerer at the city's slave market.

The market stands in the midst of the teeming port district. The streets here are crowded with people and you cannot avoid being jostled or jostling others. Before you have gone a hundred yards you have been cursed in all the languages of the earth. Gangs of chained slaves wait in silent misery while prospective buyers inspect them, loudly finding fault with the human merchandise in an attempt to secure a better price. The haggling continues in backstreet taverns, where people with no wish to be found hide from the light. You ask after Fox and Vik but none of the shadowy characters you encounter knows, or is willing to tell, where either of them can be found.

As you leave one of these drinking dens, strong arms grab you and hold you fast. You are pulled back into a dark alley, where you feel a knife held

against your throat. A foul stench like the smell of rotting fish fills your nostrils. As you struggle away from the sickening smell, the blade is pressed closer and draws blood – lose 1 STAMINA point.

‘Careful, my beauties,’ says a hateful voice, ‘or Barnacle will shave you closer still.’

The speaker steps in front of you. The man – if man it is – is short and slovenly in appearance. His head is that of a fish, completely hairless, with large bulging eyes and a wide mouth. The humanoid body is hidden by a dirty jacket which reaches down to the thighs, leaving the creature’s legs bare. The latter are covered in thick hair and end in hooves, like the hind legs of a goat.

The terrible smell, however, originates from the Goat-fish’s accomplice, who holds both you and Jardakka captive with the thick slimy tentacles that he has in place of arms.

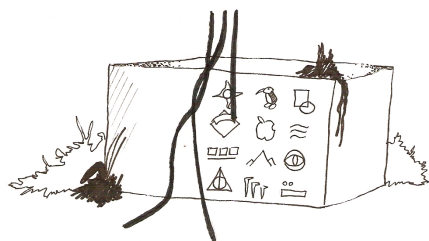
‘Looking for Vik are you?’ the goat-fish continues. ‘Now why would that be?’

What will you tell him?

That you owe Vik money? Turn to 68.

That you are mercenaries who want to work for him? Turn to 115.

That you are actually looking for Fox the sorcerer? Turn to 182.



145

One of the insect men draws two swords and advances towards you. The other hastens to untie a rope attached to a winch on the inside wall of the archway. As the rope comes loose, there is a terrible grating noise and the portcullis gate starts to lower. You realise that you have very little time.

While Jardakka engages the advancing Mant, you rush towards the winch. The insect man turns to block your path.

SOLDIER MANT SKILL 8 STAMINA 6

The Mant has two pairs of arms and wields two swords. He will attack you twice in each Attack Round. If both Attack Strengths are higher than yours, the insect man has wounded you twice – deduct 4 STAMINA points. You wound him only if your own Attack Strength is higher than both his rolls.

You may *Escape* at any time by running away from the house, but the Mant will wound you twice as you flee; deduct 4 STAMINA points rather than the usual two and turn to 197.

If you defeat the Mant within three attack rounds, turn to 172. If the battle lasts longer than this, turn to 55.

146

The Serpentine fixes you with her unblinking stare. Her gaze is hypnotic and you feel an irresistible urge to tell the truth. Jardakka looks at you in horror as you tell the snake woman that you plan to steal the mirror.

‘Thievvssss!’ she hisses.

Enno the Minimite springs into the air, squeaking in alarm, and orders the guard to kill you.

The insect man clicks obediently and draws two swords, ready to cut you down. You are unarmed and look round desperately for a weapon with which to defend yourself.

Test your Luck. If you are Lucky, turn to 198. If you are Unlucky, turn to 11.

147

You are tired after the day’s events and tell Jardakka you should both get some sleep. The Red-Eye sees the sense in your suggestion, but insists that you stay together.

‘One of us should keep watch in case those witches return. My sister’s house is not far; we can rest there.’

Jardakka leads you through the maze

of dark streets, letting Cheechak run ahead. After a little way, the monkey disappears into a house by the side of the road, the doorway to which is covered only by a sheet of heavy sail cloth. Jardakka brushes this aside and ducks into a room where a small fire is burning in the middle of the floor. A thin woman with closed eyes sits cross-legged before the flames, nursing a baby on her lap. Jardakka bends down to embrace her sister and they exchange a few words. The woman stares blindly at you and nods.

Lighting a lantern, Jardakka leads you up some stairs to a sparsely furnished room. ‘Let us call to decide who has the first watch,’ she says, producing a small bone die from the pouch at her belt.

Decide whether you will call odds or evens, then roll 1 die. If you chose correctly, turn to 92. Otherwise, turn to 218.

148

You smash the mirror repeatedly against the bedpost. The first blow cracks the glass; with the next, pointed shards fall out onto the floor of the room, exposing the metal surface behind. The gleam of polished silver fades as the mirror seems to tarnish and blacken before your very eyes. The third blow causes it to snap in two, leaving you holding only the handle; the heavy oval disc falls to the floor with a dull thump.

You hear footsteps approaching along the corridor, doubtless attracted by the noise. Someone knocks on the closed door and a silky voice asks after Leilana.

Thinking quickly, Jardakka drags the heavy chest in front of the door, just in time to stop the person outside from opening it. The response is immediate; there is a furious hammering at the door and another voice demands that whoever is inside open it at once.

The door is the only one in the room. You rush over to the window and throw open the shutters.

If you have a coil of rope, you can tie it to one of the bedposts and climb

down into the street. Turn to **34**.

Otherwise, you will have to risk jumping (turn to **170**).

149

The hill is steep and you are glad when you reach the top. One of the stone blocks in the wall to your left has been carved to resemble the god Hydana. A stream of clear water trickles out of his mouth. A dented metal cup hangs nearby for those who want to drink from the fountain. You are hot after your climb and drink gladly. The water is cold but refreshing – restore 1 STAMINA point. If you have a water bottle, you may fill it from the fountain. Continue onwards by turning to **64**.

150

The merchant looks thoughtful, as if it has just occurred to him that you might be telling the truth, but the moment of doubt passes as quickly as a cloud before the sun.

‘Well, I can’t help you then. I’m certainly not going to give you the mirror for nothing, so you can put that thought right out of your heads. Come back when you’ve got a sensible business proposal to put to me. And now, good day!’

He turns and stalks from the room leaving you alone with the snake woman. Turn to **82**.

151

As you rush at the Serpentine, she throws down her bow and pulls a dagger from inside her clothes. Jardakka is too badly wounded to take any part in this battle; you must face the snake woman alone.

SERPENTINE SKILL 9 STAMINA 6

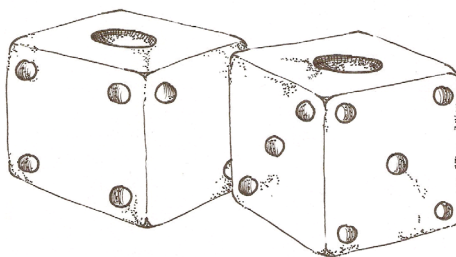
If the snake woman wins two Attack Rounds in a row, turn at once to **206**. If you win the battle before this happens, turn to **230**.

152

The gold-backed mirror is far too large and heavy to carry. Shielding yourself against the flames, you rummage through the shelves until you find something interesting. Roll 1 die to see what you have found:

1. Vial of glue
2. Nose plugs
3. Bag of Goblin teeth
4. Bamboo flute
5. Gram of yellow powder
6. Cloth skullcap

One of the wooden chests has been locked. You try to open it but the flames beat you back before you can force the lock. The smoke is now overpowering – lose 2 STAMINA points. As you stagger out of the shop, the residents of neighbouring houses are already gathering to tackle the blaze before the flames spread to their own properties. Someone accuses you of looting and you leave the area quickly. Turn to **7**.



153

Jardakka slashes at the first Shield Maiden, wounding her. As the sword connects, it blazes with light and the shade lets out a deep groan. The second Shield Maiden hastens to her companion’s aid but you step forward at once and engage her. Although you cannot harm the ghost, you can prevent her from reaching Jardakka by parrying her blows.

Resolve this uneven combat as follows. If your Attack Strength is equal to or higher than that of the Shield Maiden, you have successfully parried her blow. If her Attack Strength is higher than yours, she has wounded you. Her blade has the power to paralyse you – deduct 1 SKILL and 2 STAMINA points each time you are wounded.

SHIELD MAIDEN SKILL 8

If you survive four Attack Rounds, turn to **28**.

154

The creature opens its mouth wide to catch the fruit. You hear a satisfied crunch and the JIB-JIB appears to lose all interest in you. While it has its mouth full, you seize the opportunity

to run quickly to the back door of the house. You are in luck – it is unlocked. You open the door and slip into the lighted corridor beyond. Turn to **110**.

155

On the far side of the bridge, the street ends at a junction. To your left, you can hear the tinkling of several small bells, and the sound of metal chains being dragged across the ground. The noise seems to be coming from a cloaked figure shuffling slowly down the middle of the road. A cloud of flies hovers about its head; with your farsight, you can see that the heavy woollen cloak is crawling with them.

If you want to walk in this direction, turn to **196**. If you would rather avoid the cloaked figure by heading down the street to your right, turn to **95**.

156

The square is strewn with dead and dying dogs. The body lying nearest to you has a bracelet of finger bones on its wrist. You may take this with you if you wish.

Jardakka walks over to one of the wounded dogs, its hair scorched by Fox’s magic, and puts the beast out of its misery.

‘Strange, I never knew a pack of dog men fight to the death before.’ She turns towards Fox, who is bandaging a cut. ‘Vik must really want you dead.’

‘Don’t worry. I know Vik. I can sort this out.’

You know Vik too; as a dangerous man, a leading light in Kharé’s underworld. Slaves are just one of the commodities he traffics. The thought occurs to you that he might have you all killed.

If you want to go with Fox, turn to **208**. If you would rather get out while you still can, turn to **3**.



157

You peel the fruit with the small knife at your belt and eat it as you go. If you had not eaten at all today, you were extremely hungry and the fruit is just enough to keep your strength up. If you have already eaten, it provides additional energy – restore 2 STAMINA points.

‘What now?’ Jardakka demands.

One possibility would be to go to the house of Shar-kali-Sharri and attempt to steal the mirror under the cover of darkness. On the other hand, it might be better to find Fox first; there is strength in numbers.

If you want to raid the house of the merchant, turn to 47. If would rather go to Fox’s house, turn to 121.

158

Hagbut reaches for the bracelet of finger bones around your wrist, but you draw your hand back.

‘Give me that,’ he snaps, ‘you don’t know what to do with it!’

He offers you 5 Gold Pieces for the bracelet, if you choose to sell it. If you now have enough money to buy the sword of Glantanka, turn to 135. If not, you may either attempt to steal it (turn to 9), or ask whether Hagbut has anything else for sale (turn to 178).

159

‘Jishai! My gold has been stolen!’ Jardakka looks around angrily but the thief is nowhere to be seen.

While you were watching the demonstration, a cutpurse was busy working the crowd. *Test your Luck*. If you are Unlucky, you were also one of the victims; you discover that your belt pouch is missing, together with any money you had. Continue on your way by turning to 66.

160

The arrow thuds into your left shoulder, knocking you back against the sarcophagus. Deduct 3 STAMINA points. If you are still alive, turn to 195.



161

‘But they are already here!’

The witch bends forward, until her face is almost touching the floor, and caresses the wooden boards as if they were a lover.

The dust and filth that has accumulated on the floor of the house seems to be moving of its own accord. The detritus crawls into the centre of the floor where it forms a seething, shifting heap, like a mound of ants. As you watch, it rises up, forming a choking cloud. Your mouth becomes dry and you are seized by a spasm of coughing. When you can look up again, you seem to see human faces in the cloud of dust, faces that appear and disappear like bubbles in froth. They have no eyes.

‘Who calls us? Who?’

‘I do.’ The cloud veers towards you, as if following the sound of your voice.

You stammer out your request, that the spirits tell you how to defeat the ghostly Shield Maidens.

‘The mirror. Their souls are bound to the mirror. Break the glass!’

You will not be given an option in the text to do this; when you hold the mirror of Iltikar in your hands, deduct 99 from the reference you are on and turn to the new reference if you want to follow the spirits’ advice.

The cloud of dust swirls about the room. ‘And now you must pay! We want an eye, sightmaster. Give us your right eye that we may see!’

If you agree to sacrifice your right eye, turn to **86**. If you would rather offer the spirits something else, turn to **117**.

162

A quick search of the hall fails to reveal the mirror of Iltikar. However, you do discover a wooden chest secured with three iron locks.

If you want to break the chest open, turn to **5**. If you would rather leave the hall, you have a choice between the double doors ahead of you (turn to **61**), or the small door to your left (turn to **227**).

163

The house of the merchant Shar-kali-Sharri stands on the south bank of the river Jabaji, in spacious grounds enclosed on the landward side by a high wall. The house itself is a large stone building, two storeys high, with a roof of red tiles. One wing faces directly onto the river, where the merchant has his own private quay. A street runs back from the river past the front of the house. The windows on the upper floor reflect the light; it seems Shar-kali-Sharri is so rich that he can afford to import glass from Gallantaria.

The street entrance is a large and imposing archway, guarded by two SOLDIER MANTS. These insect men have the form of ants but are as tall as a man and stand upright on their hind legs. A little winged man flits around their heads, giving orders. Will he recognise you?

If you have been here before, turn to **42**. Otherwise, turn to **130**.

164

Jardakka carries the sword slung across her back, wrapped in a cloth bundle. As she reaches for it, the bone men take a step towards her.

‘Slow!’ commands one. ‘Very,’ adds the other.

Jardakka takes the sword down with exaggerated caution and unwraps the cloth. The Sword of Glantanka shines in the dark street, glowing with a faint echo of daylight. Jardakka extends the hilt towards the bone men. As they advance to take it, she

throws the sword up in the air and catches it, bringing the blade down on the first bone man in one smooth movement. You must fight the other.

SKELETON

WARRIOR SKILL 8 STAMINA 6

If you defeat the skeleton, turn to **139**.

165

When you open your eyes again, you find yourself sitting at a table in Madam Hun’s tavern. It seems to be the middle of the day, and the tavern is full with customers. The ogress herself stands before you, resting her hands on her hips. She asks you if you would like to eat a meal at her tavern, at the cost of 2 Gold Pieces.

‘Make your mind up,’ she says impatiently, ‘you’ll not get a second chance!’

Fox and Jardakka are sitting across the table from you and for a moment you have a sense of déjà vu, as if you were reliving these events. But this is no dream and you are free to make your own choices. Start by deciding whether you want a helping of Madam Hun’s pease porridge. If you want to pay 2 Gold Pieces, turn to **229**. Otherwise, turn to **44**.

166

‘Then what have you come back here for?’ Hagbut asks in an irritated tone that is quite unlike his usual manner. You get the impression that he is afraid of something, or someone. ‘Get out of my shop now!’

If you decide to leave the shop, turn to **7**. If you would rather try to reason with him, turn to **56**.

167

If you have not yet done so, you may use the cover of darkness to raid the merchant’s house (turn to **47**). If you have been there already, or would rather get some rest, turn to **147**.

168

You start to have difficulty breathing. The bite was poisoned! A feeling of weakness washes over you and you slump to the floor. Your adventure ends here.

169

The priest of Slangg points in your direction. The MANT sees you and clicks angrily. If you do not stop him, the insect man will alert the other guards. You drop down from the wall and prepare to fight him. As you approach, the Mant lowers the pike and draws a sword with his fourth hand.

SOLDIER MANT SKILL 8 STAMINA 8

The Mant will attack you twice in each Attack Round. If both Attack Strengths are higher than yours, the insect man has wounded you twice – deduct 4 STAMINA points. You wound him only if your own Attack Strength is higher than both his rolls.

If you win the battle, turn to **67**.

170

The fall knocks all the breath out of you. Roll 1 die and deduct that number of STAMINA points.

If you wish, you may *Test your Luck* in an attempt to reduce the damage. If you are Lucky, subtract two from the number rolled; if you rolled a six, for example, you now lose only 4 STAMINA points. If you rolled a one or two, you have been incredibly lucky and escaped without any injuries. If you are Unlucky, however, the damage is worse than you first thought – you lose an additional 2 STAMINA points.

If you are still alive, pick yourself up and turn to **34**.

171

The room beyond is in darkness but the light from the corridor is sufficient to show that it contains a large four poster bed and at least one wooden chest.

If you want to search the bedchamber, turn to **72**. If you would rather close the door again, turn to **29**.

172

You manage to roll under the portcullis gate before it reaches the ground, sealing the entrance. You hold the gate open long enough for Jardakka to join you inside, then let it close completely, preventing the Worker Mants on the quayside from pursuing.

Behind you, a second archway opens onto a vast undercroft. The spaces between the stone pillars are piled high with crates and barrels, storage jars and bales of cloth. To one side, a flight of stone steps leads upwards. You race up them and pull open the door at the top.

You find yourself in a lighted corridor on the ground floor of the house. There are doors to either side of the one through which you have just entered, and double doors in the wall opposite. Turn to **110**.

173

The young women break off their conversation as you approach. They seem delighted by Cheechak and beg Jardakka to be allowed to pet the monkey. They laugh and chat with you readily enough, though their information is somewhat confused. One believes the witch to be a young woman, no older than herself, while the other thinks she is an old crone. Unfortunately, they do not know where she lives. Turn to **226**.

174

Vik shrugs and nods at the giant Goblin standing behind you.

‘Mr Fox’s friends are leaving now. No, not you, Fox. I want a word with you in private.’

The sorcerer slumps down in a chair. He looks like a beaten dog.

The Goblin shows Jardakka and you out of the house, bolting the door behind you.

‘What was all that about?’ the Red-Eye asks.

‘I don’t know. Some scheme Fox has got mixed up in. What do you want to do now? Pay the merchant a visit?’

The Red-Eye shakes her head. ‘Now we get ourselves so much magical protection that no one will mess with us, not Vik, not Shar-kali-Sharri, nor those shield-witches.’

If you think you should go to the merchant’s house, turn to **163**. If you would rather rely on magic, turn to **87**.

175

The entrance to Iltikar’s tomb is on the west side of the island, facing the setting sun. You come to a monumental doorway, three metres high, framed by massive stone jambs. A flight of steps leads down into the darkness of the tomb. A musty smell rises out of its depths.

The torches you used to light your way are still lying on the threshold where you dropped them. Jardakka stares at them and they burst into flame again. Holding the burning brands high, you descend the steps.

At the foot of the stairway, a passage leads off into the darkness. The stone walls are wet and the torches smoke in the damp air. Remembering the way, you ignore the passages that branch off to the left and right and head straight for the main burial chamber.

The last resting place of the Queen of Shades is a large polygonal hall whose low roof is supported on thick columns. Iltikar’s sarcophagus stands on a plinth in the centre of the chamber. The sarcophagus is open; the heavy stone lid, shoved aside by the Crolian on your last visit, lies shattered on the floor next to the plinth.

As you walk towards the coffin, you notice a black figure slumped against one of the columns to your left. You hold the torch high and see that it is the body of an insect man. The Mant seems to be dead. You cannot remember a body being there on your previous visit to the tomb.

If you want to investigate the body, turn to **75**. If you would rather approach the sarcophagus, turn to **123**.



176

The white figures seem to appear out of nothing.

The SHIELD MAIDENS glide towards you, swords ready for battle. What will you use to defend yourselves?

A flask of Holy Water?	Turn to 51 .
The Sword of Glantanka?	Turn to 153 .
A beeswax candle?	Turn to 219 .

If you have none of these, turn to **90**.

177

As the Mant falls, you and Jardakka snatch up its weapons and prepare to defend yourself against the insect men now hurrying into the hall.

Enno flies quickly to their side. ‘Kill them! Kill them!’ the Minimite squeaks, pointing at you.

‘Let them go!’ The Serpentine carefully picks up a statue that was knocked over in the fight and sets it on its feet. ‘I will not have my master’s house wrecked in this way.’

The Mants pause, their simple brains confused by these conflicting orders, but it quickly becomes obvious that the snake woman’s word carries more weight than that of the officious Minimite.

The Serpentine turns to you. ‘Go!’ she hisses angrily, ‘and do not come back!’

You need no further urging. You run past the waiting insect men and out into the street. You have lost your own weapon, and the sword you took from the mant feels unfamiliar to you. From now on, you must deduct 1 point from your Attack Strength in each battle. Turn to **52**.

178

Hagbut produces a small metal flask from one of the shelves.

‘Holy Water from Daddu Yadu,’ he says. ‘I don’t think it will kill your Shield Maidens but it may offer you some protection against them. Five Gold Pieces. If I sell it to you for anything less I will be robbing

myself.'

Decide whether or not you want to buy the flask of Holy Water, then leave the shop by turning to 69.



179

You happen to mention that the goddess of justice herself appeared to you last night. When he hears Libra's name, Shar-kali-Sharri lowers the makeshift weapon in his hand.

'If you are telling the truth, then we are fellow believers,' he says gruffly, 'and, despite all appearances, I cannot bring myself to believe that any devotee of the goddess would be a common thief. There must be some truth in what you say – but this is neither the hour nor the circumstances under which I wish to discuss the mirror. If you will, come back tomorrow and we will talk further. And now leave my house, before I have time to reconsider.'

You do not need to be told twice. The snake woman lets you out by the front door and you leave the area with all speed. Turn to 197.

180

The next day you meet with Fox and Jardakka and waste no time in telling them what happened.

'How do you feel now?' Jardakka asks calmly, not looking at you. The Red-Eye carves an apple with her knife and turns to feed the titbit to the monkey crouching on her shoulder. Cheechak turns the piece of fruit over in his paws and chatters gratefully.

'Rough. Libra saved my neck but she didn't see fit to heal my injuries. I suppose she felt I didn't deserve it.'

Fox strokes his chin with long, dirty fingers on which the faint tattoos of cabbalistic signs can be seen. 'Have you been back to the room since?'

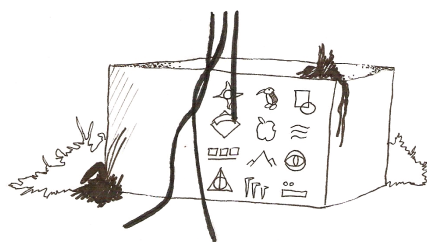
'Once, this morning. I went to fetch my money and my quarterstaff.' You shrug. 'The goddess said we were safe so long as the sun shines.'

'Hmmm.'

The three of you are sitting in Madam Hun's tavern, a favourite meeting place in Kharé's rough port district. While the others are digesting your story, the hostess herself comes across to your table, wiping her big hands on her apron. Madam Hun has a shock of wild grey hair and a mouthful of misshapen teeth.

'What are you three plotting now?' the ogress cackles. 'Well, conspiracy sits better on a full stomach. I have good blood sausage and pease porridge in the pot. Will you make a meal of it? Two Gold Pieces to you, my handsome rogues.'

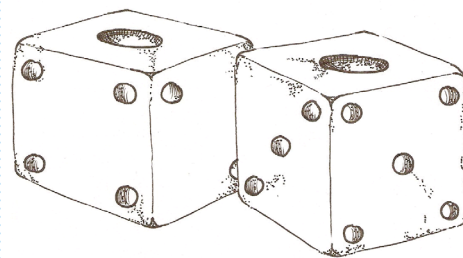
It is 2 Gold Pieces to everyone but Madam Hun's cooking is justly famous in the area. If you want to eat here, turn to 229. Otherwise, turn to 44.



181

As you take out the flask, the Witch of Krooe opens her mouth to scream, but the sound is scarcely audible above the terrific buzzing of the cloud.

You throw the holy water at the swirling dust. All at once the noise stops and the dust falls to the ground in damp, lifeless clumps. Turn to 220.



182

The goat-fish laughs. 'So that's your game! Well, you're too late, bounty hunter; Fox has paid his debt to Vik.'

The creature nods at his accomplice, a huge Water Troll, who releases you from his grip. The Goat-fish and the Troll walk away down the alley, leaving you to continue your search for Fox. Turn to 46.

183

The girl hardly listens to you, convinced as she is that you have come to kill her. She becomes hysterical and starts screaming loudly.

You look round and see the priest of Slangg running towards you, closely followed by a SOLDIER MANT.

Jardakka curses and starts to draw her scimitar but you pull her away. You leave the weeping girl and run off down the street towards the river. Turn to 80.

184

The street ends at a junction with another street running up and down a hill. To your left, a dirty track, rutted by rainwater channels, climbs up the hill. To your right, the street descends a flight of broad, stone steps. The timber-framed houses on either side are tall and close set, giving the street the appearance of a tunnel. High overhead, washing has been hung out to dry on lines running across the gap between the houses. Which direction will you go?

Left?
Right?

Turn to 149.
Turn to 14.

The Minimite leads you down a broad corridor with doors on either side. The interior of the house is just as impressive as the façade. The ceilings are high, the floor under foot is paved with large flagstones. Two Soldier Mants stand guard outside massive double doors in the wall to your right; at Enno's command, one of the insect men opens them and accompanies you into the room beyond.

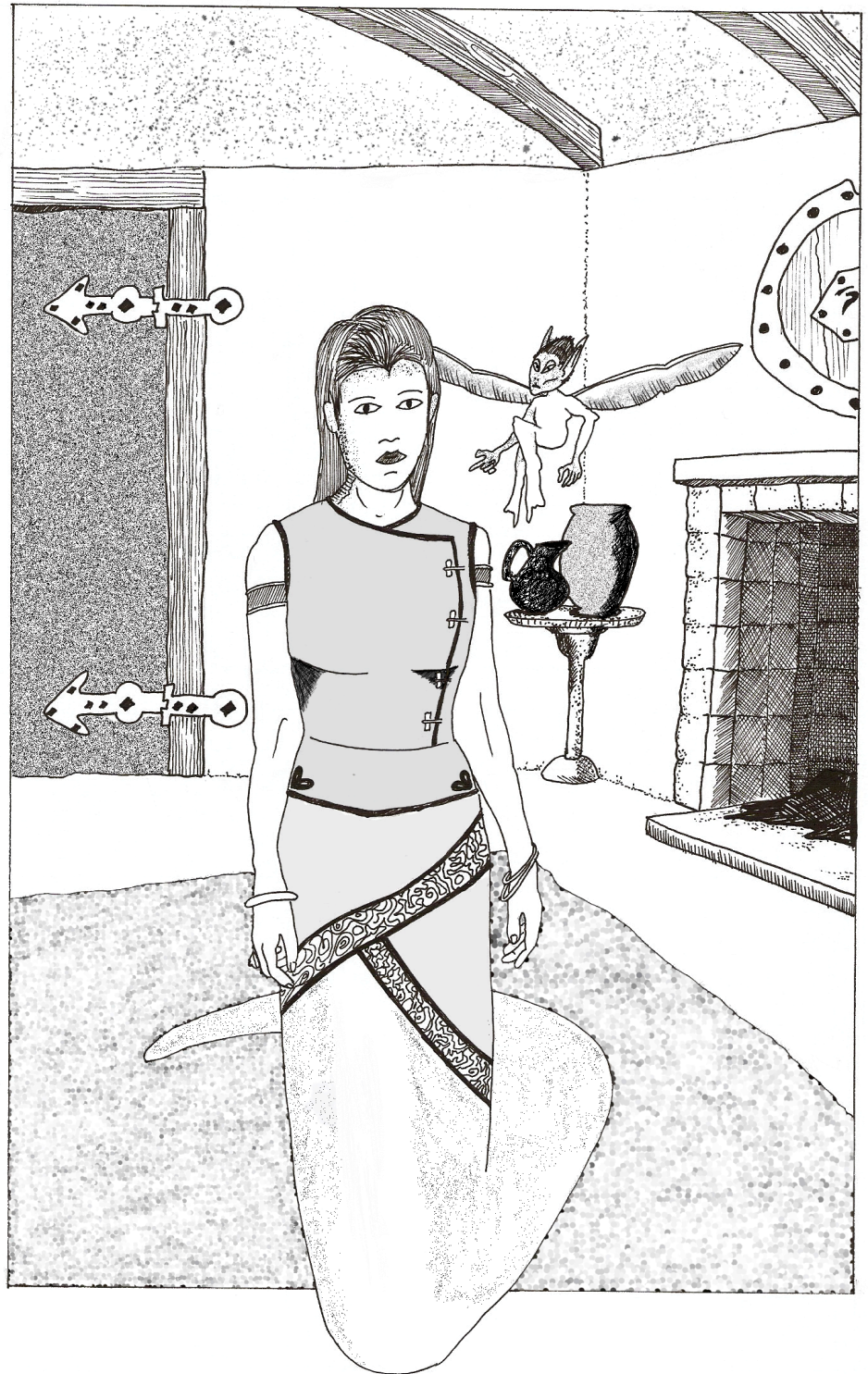
Jardakka whistles softly. You stand in the great hall of the house. For once, the adjective lives up to its name. Everything is on a monumental scale, a statement of Shar-kali-Sharri's power and prestige. A cavernous fireplace takes up the wall to your right; to your left, a great expanse of glass, easily three metres across, looks out over the gardens. In front of this window is a long wooden table, dominated by the high-backed chair at one end. You would not be surprised if someone told you that it was the throne of a king.

'Wait here, please.' The Minimite flits over to another set of double doors in the far wall and disappears through the gap between them, leaving you alone with the Mant. The insect man does not try to stop you wandering around, allowing you to admire, but not touch, the costly antiques with which the hall is decorated. You wonder if the mirror of Illtikar is kept here but, if it is, it is not on display.

The double doors open and the Minimite reappears, but your attention is drawn rather by his exotic companion. The snake woman has the arms and head of a human female but the long sinuous body of a serpent. She holds her body upright, like a cobra poised to strike, but her long tail trails across the floor behind her. She slithers over to you. Even her head is not fully human because she has the large yellow eyes and pointed fangs of a snake.

'Yesss?'

You tell the SERPENTINE that you must speak to Shar-kali-Sharri about a private matter, the recent sale of an antique mirror.



'I am my master's eyesss and earsss. You may tell me everything.'

What you tell her will depend on your real intentions in coming here. What do you plan to do?



Scare the merchant into giving you back the mirror by revealing that it is cursed?

Turn to 74.

Find out where the mirror is so that you can come back later to steal it?

Turn to 146.

Take the mirror by force, killing Shar-kali-Sharri if necessary?

Turn to 217.

186

'The fox at bay,' growls the lead Dog, looking around the enclosed square. 'Seems you took a wrong turn.' The others snigger.

'What do you want, dogbreath?' Jardakka calls.

'Oh, nothing to do with you, little lady. You and the sightmaster can be on your way. Our business is with Master Fox.'

'What concerns Fox concerns us all,' you say quietly.

'Oh really? Well, I'd be more careful about the company you keep,' the Dog continues. 'Fox here has made some powerful enemies, haven't you Fox?'

'As it happens, I'm just on my way to see Vik now,' the sorcerer replies, causing another ripple of laughter to pass through the pack.

'Too late for that Fox. You're dead meat.' The Dog glares at you and Jardakka. 'You too unless you walk away now.'

He whistles; a door opens in a house behind you and out trot another six Dog Men. You are outnumbered four to one.

If you want to leave Fox and walk away, turn to 3. If you would rather fight the Dog Men, turn to 50.

187

When you look more closely, you see that the figure in the bed is really just a large doll, with pillows arranged beneath the covers to make it seem as if a real person were sleeping there. There is a large wooden chest underneath the bed. When you pull it out and open it, you find that it contains a pile of folded clothes. Hidden between them is the mirror of Iltikar. Add 1 LUCK point. You take the mirror in your hands, scarcely believing that such a beautiful ornament could be the cause of so many problems. Turn to 132.

188

Jardakka opens her eyes and stares intently at the ship. You can see the cold night air in front of her face

crackle with heat. On board the galley, a small flame is kindled. The fire spreads to a tarred rope and races up the mast.

A great cry of alarm leaves the captain's lips. His crew have seen the flames and hasten to douse them but the tar burns fiercely; soon one side of the ship is ablaze. Now the main concern is to save the valuable cargo. The Worker Mants set down their burdens and rush as one to the ship. Enno the Minimite flies quickly across to join them, flapping his wings in agitation. His squeaky voice can barely be heard above the general commotion and he succeeds only in adding to the panic.

You run over to the house. The two Soldier Mants have not left their post and cross their weapons to bar the entrance. You hear a succession of angry clicks.

In a breathless voice, you tell the insect men that you must rouse the rest of the household; buckets to fetch water and extra hands to carry them are needed. The insect men look at you suspiciously, unsure whether to believe you.

Test your Luck. If you are Lucky, turn to 71. If you are Unlucky, turn to 145.

189

Despite your fears, the Shield Maidens do not make an appearance during the voyage, for reasons you can only speculate on.

'Perhaps they know we're taking their damned mirror back to them,' Jardakka suggests.

You shrug. The warrior women's absence is at once both welcome and disturbing.

On the evening of the second day, the *Mermaid* arrives at a village on the southern shores of Lake Lumlé. From here, the ship will begin trawling the lake for the prized Mutton Fish. Your destination, however, lies to the west, where the island of Nilgiri stands silhouetted against the sunset.

You spend the night aboard the ship. Early the following morning, you leave the *Mermaid* and cut inland

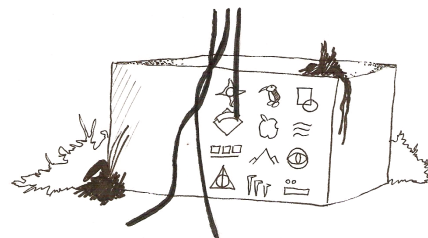
across marshy country, reaching the lake shore opposite the island by mid-afternoon. Hidden amongst the reeds that fringe the great lake is the rowing boat you used to travel back from the island on your ill-fated quest. No one has discovered it in the intervening days and the oars still lie in the bottom.

Cheechak jumps down into the boat and runs up to the prow, where he pauses, staring forward at the island. You push the boat out into the water and row across to Nilgiri.

The island is thickly wooded with ancient trees. Their foliage casts shadows that deepen as the sun sinks in the sky. Great stones loom out of the green twilight; beneath the covering of moss you can just make out the remains of hieroglyphic inscriptions.

You realise that the wood is completely silent; the ever present chattering of Cheechak has stopped. You look around but Jardakka's monkey is nowhere to be seen.

Roll 2 dice. If the number rolled is less than or equal to your current SKILL score, turn to 20. If the number is greater, turn to 106.



190

The door opens onto a room lit by two beeswax candles. The candles stand at either end of a long low table, flanking a small, delicate statue of a woman. She holds a pair of scales in her left hand; her right hand is raised, palm forward, as if she were blessing someone. You realise that the room is a private shrine to Libra, goddess of justice.

If you wish to kneel before the statue and offer a prayer, turn to 49. If you want to search the shrine, turn to 128. If you would rather close the door again, turn to 29.

191

‘The respectable Shar-kali-Sharri! I am good friends with his steward Enno, a little fellow that cannot hold his beer. One thimbleful and he is in his cups. He tells me all the secrets of the household. The merchant is devoted to his only child, a daughter, but of late they have had a great falling out. The girl believes herself in love with an acolyte of Slangg but Shar-kali-Sharri has forbidden them to meet. He fears the priest is only interested in getting his hands on his riches. And if you saw the girl, you would be inclined to believe him! She is no beauty.’

You are not sure how this information can help you but you give Snitch his gold anyway; perhaps he can find out something about the layout of the house? The little man nods, eager to oblige. He pockets the coins and disappears into the crowd. Turn to **66**.

192

You must fight both the SHIELD MAIDENS at the same time.

First SHIELD MAIDEN SKILL 9 STAMINA 7
Second SHIELD MAIDEN SKILL 8 STAMINA 8

If they wound you, turn at once to **96**.

If you succeed in defeating the first Shield Maiden, turn to **54**.

193

The shopkeeper comes out from behind the counter and attacks Jardakka. His friend attacks you; you must fight him.

OGRE SKILL 8 STAMINA 11

You may *Escape* from this battle at any time by leaving the shop, although the Ogre will deal you a final blow to send you on your way (turn to **111**). If you fight on and win, turn to **142**.

194

Hagbut the Gnome keeps a shop near The Gambling Halls of Vlada. A market is taking place in the street outside the Halls and you have to push your way through the crowd, nearly deafened by the cries of the sellers.

‘Koorda fruit!’ A farmer from the Shamutanti Hills stands in front of his cart. In one broad hand, he holds up a large green fruit, its skin bristling with spines.

‘Who will buy my lovely koorda fruit? Each one a meal in itself. One Gold Piece only. Come buy! Come buy!’

If you want to try some of the fruit, turn to **73**. If you would rather keep walking, turn to **140**.

195

An exotic creature slithers out from behind the columns of the hall. The woman has the arms and head of a human female but the long sinuous body of a serpent. She holds her body upright, like a cobra poised to strike, but her long tail trails across the floor behind her. Even her head is not fully human because she has the large yellow eyes of a snake. A quiver is strapped to her back. As you stare, the snake woman strings another arrow to her bow.

‘Silver arrowsss,’ the SERPENTINE hisses. ‘They did for the dead women. If you do not give me the mirror they will finish you too.’

‘I’ll see you burn first!’ Jardakka cries, her eyes flashing dangerously. But in the next moment she groans and sinks back against the sarcophagus, an arrow shaft protruding from her thigh. The Red-Eye drops her sword and sinks to the ground, clutching her wounded leg.

The Serpentine has time to fire one more arrow at you. Roll 2 dice. If the number rolled is 9 or less, the arrow hits you – deduct 3 STAMINA points.

If you are still alive, turn to **151**.

196

As you pass by, the figure reaches out towards you. The hands of the creature are covered with festering boils and, to judge by the awful smell, its flesh must be rotting away. Its very touch is contagion. The foul PESTILENCE has been saddled with bells and chains to warn passers by of its approach but you have walked straight into its path. Filled

with disgust, you lash out with your weapons.

PESTILENCE SKILL 7 STAMINA 7

The Pestilence will fight both you and Jardakka at the same time. Conduct your battle as normal. Each Attack Round, roll 1 die to see if Jardakka has wounded the creature – if you roll a 4, 5 or 6, you may deduct 2 additional STAMINA points.

If you defeat it, turn to **143**.

197

You come to a halt in a side street, relieved that there are no sounds of pursuit. A full moon hangs in the southern sky, reminding you that the danger is far from over.

Jardakka looks around, as if expecting the ghostly figures of the Shield Maidens to emerge from one of the darkened side streets. You wonder who they will come for next; will they try to kill you again, or will they target Fox or Jardakka?

‘Maybe they’ll leave us alone,’ the Red-Eye suggests. ‘After all, we don’t have the mirror.’

It is a comforting thought but not one that you can bring yourself to believe. You shake your head. ‘They’ll keep killing until the mirror is back in Illtikar’s tomb.’

Jardakka’s eyes flash in the darkness. ‘Or until someone kills them first. Maybe we should hunt them down.’

‘No need I think; they will find us.’

If you have not done so already, you may go to look for Fox (turn to **121**). If you think you should get some rest, turn to **147**.

198

You notice that a carved wooden staff rests in the hands of one of the statues that ornament the room. It is neither as long nor as heavy as your quarterstaff but it is better than nothing. You snatch the staff from the stone figure’s unresisting hands and prepare to combat the Mant with it.

‘Stop!’ The Serpentine’s voice is almost a scream and she slithers

forward quickly.

'Don't you know what you hold in your handsss? That is a Throben spirit staff – it is priceless. Only give me the staff – you will not be harmed – and I will see that you are granted an audience with my master.'

'Don't trust the snake!' Jardakka warns. 'They were ready to kill us a minute ago!'

If you want to give up the staff, turn to **18**. If you don't trust the Serpentine's promises and would rather fight, turn to **138**.



199

The door opens onto a lighted room. Two off duty **SOLDIER MANTS** sit around a crude wooden table, playing at dice. They click angrily when they see you and struggle to their feet. You must cut them down before they can raise the alarm. You attack one, while Jardakka tackles the other guard.

SOLDIER MANT SKILL 6 STAMINA 10

You have taken the insect men by surprise and they have not had time to pick up their weapons. They will attack you only once in each Attack Round, by attempting to bite you with their powerful jaws. Resolve the battle as normal.

If you win, turn to **21**.

200

The curse of Iltikar, Queen of Shades, has been broken and you are free to live your lives again. Yet there can be no return to the way you lived before; this adventure has not left you without scars. Your erstwhile comrades in arms – Fox, Vanaru and the Crolian – are dead. In time, you will find new companions but for now another foray into the wilderness is out of the question. You have even begun to doubt whether this is the path you want to follow in life. It has already cost you the favour of Libra, goddess of justice.

'Jishai! You sound like a holy man!' Jardakka scoffs.

You do not think that you are cut out for a life of prayer and meditation. You left Analand in search of adventure, and adventure calls you still. But in future you resolve to lend your sword to nobler causes than robbing tombs. Perhaps in this way you may one day regain the help and support of Libra. Your next adventure begins here.

201

Hagbut the Gnome keeps a shop near The Gambling Halls of Vlada. The street outside the Halls often serves as a market place. As you arrive, the traders are just packing up their stalls.

Hagbut's shop is hidden in the maze of side streets behind the Halls. You have been a regular customer in the past and have no difficulty finding it. The shop has iron bars across the windows; a bedraggled green wig hanging above the door advertises that it belongs to a dealer in magical artefacts. You push open the door and enter the shop.

If you were here earlier, turn to **85**. If this is your first visit today, turn to **131**.

202

You push your chair back from the table. Fox has seen his danger and is already muttering the words of a spell. Before he can cast it, Jardakka blinks again and two streams of fire burn through the air towards the sorcerer. Fox throws himself backwards instinctively; as he does so, his arm swings out and the lightning bolt that was intended for Jardakka shoots towards you! *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to **62**. If you are Unlucky, turn to **13**.

203

You go back to the slave market and, after a few false turns, find the door marked with the black sun. It is firmly locked. When you knock, the giant Goblin tells you that Fox has left some while before. Before you can ask where he has gone, the panel slides shut again. Turn to **46**.

204

'The Sightmaster and Jardakka!' Snitch says, laughing nervously, and you know at once that with those words he has betrayed you.

The soldiers turn to face you, and you see the skulls beneath their black hoods. The **SKELETON WARRIORS** menace you with their swords.

'Sword' demands one, reaching out a skeletal hand towards you. 'Glantanka' clarifies the other.

If you have the Sword of Glantanka, turn to **164**. Otherwise, turn to **59**.

205

After you leave the square, you meet with few people. The doors on either side are closed, the windows shuttered. It is very quiet. When you have walked a little way, the street goes up and over a small wooden bridge. As you are crossing, you lean over the parapet and look down. A sluggish canal flows between the houses on either side. Almost directly beneath you is a small boat, tethered to the bridge. A fisherman lies sprawled in the boat, his hat tipped across his face; his line trails in the still, green water.

If you want to throw a stone into the water to wake him up, turn to **133**. If you would rather continue on your way, turn to **155**.



206

The Serpentine darts forward and bites you. Deduct 2 STAMINA points (in addition to the normal damage you suffered in this Attack Round). As the snake woman draws back you notice the venom dripping from her fangs.

If you have drunk the Potion of Life, turn to 107. Otherwise, turn to 168.

207

Cheechak scampers up the wall with enviable ease and runs quickly to and fro along the top. The creature's chattering indicates that it has seen no danger on the far side. Jardakka stands on your shoulders and hauls herself up onto the wall; sitting astride it, she reaches down to give you a hand up before dropping down on the far side.

As you reach the top of the wall, you hear footsteps approaching along the street. The priest of Slangg returns in the company of a SOLDIER MANT. The insect man holds a lantern aloft with one of his four hands; two others grasp a long pike. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 32. If you are Unlucky, turn to 169.

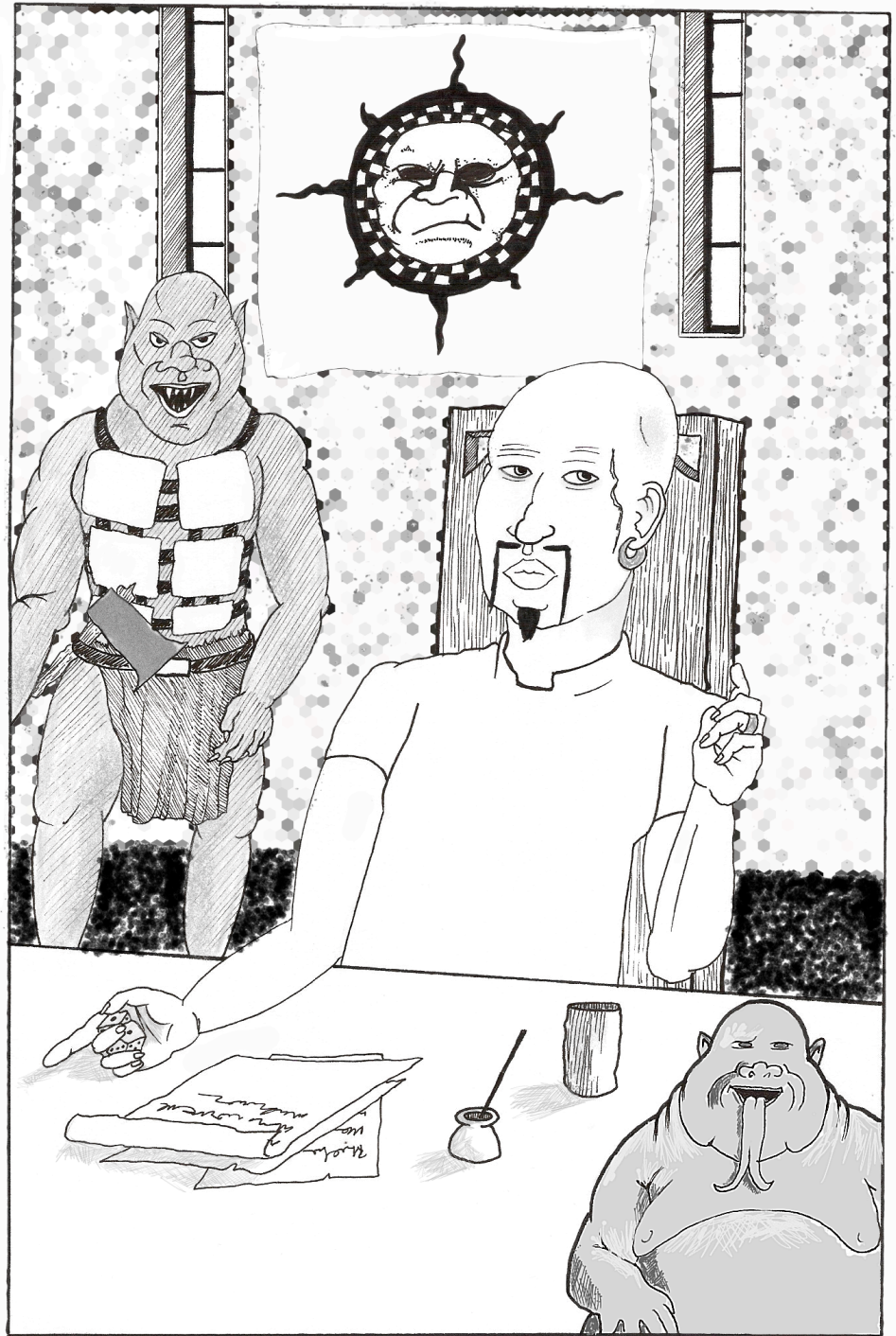


208

You follow Fox back to the slave market, where he takes you down another side street, finally stopping outside a door painted with a black sun. The sorcerer hammers on the door until a panel slides back and a brutish voice demands to know your business.

'It's Fox the sorcerer. I've come to see Vik.'

After a pause, the door is opened and a giant Goblin ushers you up a flight of stone steps to a room on the first floor. In contrast to the rest



of the house, which seems in an advanced state of dereliction, this room is opulently furnished with wall hangings and fine furniture. A bronze idol of Slangg, god of malice, stands on top of a large desk. A dark-skinned man is seated behind the desk, playing with a pair of bone dice. His clothes are those of a successful merchant but the scar running down his cheek hints at a rougher profession. He stands up as you enter, not quite able to hide his surprise.

'Your dogs are dead, Vik,' Fox says.

You notice the Goblin rest a heavy hand on the hilt of the axe it carries at

its belt; an obvious gesture, designed to be noticed. The creature must be at least seven foot tall.

Vik laughs. 'My dogs? You should know that I don't hire such rabble. But I'll not lie; I'm running out of patience with you, Fox.'

He takes a bottle out of his desk drawer and waves it in your direction. 'A drink for you and your friends?'

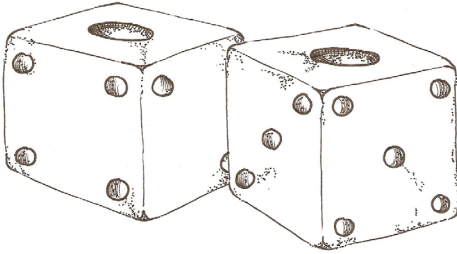
If you accept Vik's offer, turn to 228. If you would rather decline politely, turn to 89.

209

You have fallen about six metres. No one can expect to fall so far without sustaining some injury. Roll 1 die and deduct that number of STAMINA points.

If you wish, you may *Test your Luck* in an attempt to reduce the damage. If you are Lucky, subtract two from the number rolled; if you rolled a six, for example, you now lose only 4 STAMINA points. If you rolled a one or two, you have been incredibly lucky and escaped without any injuries. If you are Unlucky, however, the damage is worse than you first thought – you lose an additional 2 STAMINA points.

If you are still alive, pick yourself up and turn to 26.



210

'I have the very thing.'

Hagbut unlocks a large wooden chest and retrieves a cloth bundle. He unwraps it carefully to reveal a sword with black runes inscribed down the middle of the blade. They read GLNTNK GAVE ME, HVR MADE ME. At the centre of the pommel is a sun emblem.

'The Crolian had a sword,' Jardakka objects, 'and it didn't do him any good.'

Hagbut waves his hand impatiently. 'This sword is not of earth. The metal from which it was forged fell in fire from heaven, the gift of Glantanka. In dark places the blade shines with a faint echo of her light. And it is death for all the creatures of the night.'

Jardakka remains sceptical. 'Killed one of the living dead have you?'

'You know I am no warrior. But there is good reason to believe it is true; the man who sold it to me was being hunted by servants of the Third Noble.'

'The Vampire?'

'It is the only blade in the whole city that could kill him and he covets it.' Hagbut winces. 'And for that reason I am willing to sell this priceless relic to you for the knock down price of 30 Gold Pieces.'

If you have 30 Gold Pieces and want to buy the sword, turn to 135. Otherwise, turn to 78.

211

Jardakka regains consciousness; apart from a sore head she is unhurt. A quick search of the bodies reveals 3 Gold Pieces and a tin whistle. When you blow on it, the whistle gives off a jaunty note. You may take this with you if you wish. Turn to 46.

212

You find that you can hardly walk. You have a cramp in your legs. Your feet feel like heavy stumps; just to lift them requires a great effort. As you stagger towards the door, the filthy old woman crawls towards you on all fours. She opens her mouth to reveal sharp pointed teeth.

If you want to strike her with your staff, turn to 45. If not, she quickly catches up with you (turn to 103).

213

You shrug. 'We got into this mess by straying from the path of justice. I must obey the goddess now.' Turn to 132.

214

The mirror of Iltikar holds you spellbound. You watch the hunchbacked girl limp to the back door and leave the house. If you see her again, add 99 to the reference you are on if you want to approach her.

The snake woman takes your arm and leads you to the front door, where the soldier Mants give you back your quarterstaff. Turn to 52.

215

If you have not eaten at all today, you are now weak with hunger – lose 3 STAMINA points.

'What now?' Jardakka demands.

One possibility would be to attempt

to steal the mirror under the cover of darkness. On the other hand, it might be better to find Fox first; there is strength in numbers.

If you want to raid the house of the merchant, turn to 47. If you would rather go to Fox's house, turn to 121.

216

The robbers were poor men and have nothing worth taking. You return to the main street and continue onwards. Turn to 184.

217

The Serpentine fixes you with her unblinking stare. Her gaze is hypnotic and you feel an irresistible urge to tell the truth. Jardakka looks at you in horror as you tell the snake woman that you plan to kill the merchant and take the mirror.

'Assassinsss!' she hisses.

Enno the Minimite springs into the air, squeaking in alarm, and orders the guard to kill you. The insect man clicks obediently and draws two swords, ready to cut you down. You are unarmed and look round desperately for a weapon with which to defend yourself. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to 198. If you are Unlucky, turn to 11.

218

Jardakka starts to bed down on the floor, leaving you to take the first watch. The Red-Eye falls asleep almost at once, leaving you alone with the shadows cast by the lantern light.

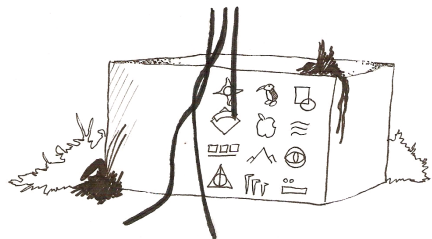
The house is very quiet and you find yourself fighting to stay awake. Roll 2 dice and add 6 to the number rolled.

If the total is less than or equal to your current STAMINA score, turn to 176. If the total is greater than your STAMINA, you lose the battle and fall asleep (turn to 129).



219

Hurriedly, you light the beeswax candle using the lantern flame. The candle burns steadily; its light has the curious effect of making the warrior women appear fainter and more indistinct. This, however, is its only obvious impact. Without the proper spells, the candle is useless against the Shield Maidens. Turn to 90.



220

When you open your eyes, you are sitting on the floor of the first floor room overlooking the canal. Though the sky is still light, the sun has gone down beneath the roofs of the houses opposite and a chill has entered the house.

You hear footsteps approaching and a moment later Jardakka enters the room.

'It's getting late,' she says. 'We can't waste any more time waiting around here.'

You are groggy and don't reply at once.

She grins. 'Did you fall asleep?'

You get up and follow her downstairs. On the ground floor you pause to investigate a bundle of filthy rags but it is exactly what it appears to be. Jardakka clicks her tongue impatiently. You follow her out the door and into the street beyond. You walk back towards the city centre, glad to be leaving Krooe. Turn to 7.

221

You find yourself in the garden of the merchant's house. It is planted with tall shrubs that have been skilfully trimmed to resemble great beasts, such as a crawling Dragon. They offer excellent cover, allowing you to get close to the house without being seen. Cheechak leads the way, scouting for danger, followed by Jardakka, with you bringing up the rear.

You hear a rustling off to your left and moments later a strange creature stomps into view. It resembles a ball of fur with two large feet and round, mournful eyes. When it sees you, it stops and opens and closes its mouth twice.

If you have a koorda fruit, you can throw it to the beast by turning to 154. Otherwise, turn to 94.



222

The three of you leave Madam Hun's tavern together, Jardakka with her pet Cheechak riding on her shoulder. Fox leads the way to the city's slave market on the banks of the river Jabaji. Men and women from Daddu Ley to Lake Lumlé are traded here. As you arrive, you see a group being led away by bone men wearing the black livery of the Third Noble. Rumour has it that their master is a Vampire; whatever the truth, the nobleman seems to have an insatiable appetite for new slaves.

'We're being followed, Fox' Jardakka says calmly.

'I see them,' the sorcerer replies. 'Let's get off the main street and we'll find out what they want.'

You turn down an alley that leads into a dirty square surrounded by tall stone buildings, once palatial residences now fallen into disrepair. The square is empty, apart from a pump that dribbles water noisily onto the paving stones beneath. The hustle and bustle of the slave market is a murmur in the background. Here you turn to await your pursuers.

One by one, six DOG MEN file out of the alley and spread out across the square to confront you. They have the bodies of thin, wiry men, though covered all over with a fine hair, and the heads of dogs. Each carries a drawn sword. They stand a head shorter than you, but what they lack in height they make up for in numbers. The Dog Men are almost universally despised in Kharé; keen to pick a fight when the odds are

stacked in their favour they are quick to run away if things go against them. You have no doubt that they mean you harm, though they seem in no hurry to attack you.

If you want to strike the first blow, turn to 101. If you would rather listen to what they have to say, turn to 186.

223

'What are you doing in my master's house?' the snake woman asks in her silky voice.

'Thieves!' the Cyclops roars. 'Nothing but common thieves! Where are my guards?'

Jardakka leaps forward to cut him down before he can summon the insect men but Shar-kali-Sharri parries her blow with his iron poker, showing surprising skill for a merchant. In the next moment, the snake woman pulls a dagger from inside her clothes and lunges at you. You must fight her.

SERPENTINE SKILL 9 STAMINA 6

If the snake woman wins two Attack Rounds in a row, turn at once to 206. If you win the battle before this happens, turn to 41.



224

Enki gives you a dour look. If he were not short of rowers, he would probably refuse to take you on his ship. As it is, he waves you to your place on the benches. Turn to 57.

225

Your sharp eyes pick out a familiar face in the crowd, a small man with a long, pointed nose. He is called Snitch and likes to think himself your friend. Luckily he has not yet seen you; if he does, he will probably start begging and pleading for money.

If you have no money, or want to save your gold, you had better try to slip away now. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, he does not notice you (turn to 66). If you are Unlucky, he catches sight of you before you can disappear into the crowd (turn to 99).

On the other hand, Snitch sometimes has useful information about people in the city. If you want to attract his attention, turn straight to 99.



226

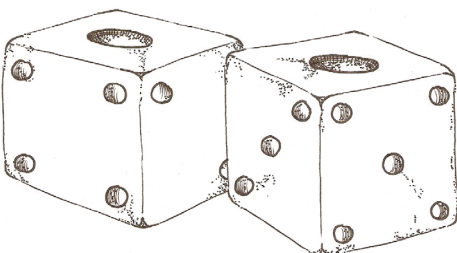
Two narrow streets lead off the square, one heading west, the other south. Which direction will you go?

West?
South?

Turn to 205.
Turn to 37.

227

The door opens onto a wooden staircase leading upwards. Although the staircase itself is dark, there is a faint glow coming from the floor above.



If you want to creep up the stairs to the first floor of the house, turn to 29. If you would rather stay and search the great hall, turn to 162.



228

Vik fills four small glasses with a clear spirit. He raises one of the glasses to his lips and drinks. 'Your good health.'

You wonder what is in the glass. Vik notices your hesitation and laughs. 'Drink up, Sightmaster! I'm not my brother!' Anxious not to offend him, you down the drink in one. The spirit is fiery and burns your throat as it goes down, causing you to cough and splutter, but its health-giving properties are undoubted. A warm feeling of well-being spreads through your body – restore 2 STAMINA points. Turn to 89.

229

You are hungry and quickly devour the portion set before you. Restore 3 STAMINA points and turn to 44.



230

The serpent's coils continue to writhe even in death, smearing the stone floor with blood. Only when it lies still do you dare to turn your back on the corpse and attend to Jardakka. The wounded Red-Eye waves you away impatiently; with a nod towards the sarcophagus she indicates what you must do.

Your torch still lies where you dropped it; the flame has burned low and the burial chamber is now in almost complete darkness. You walk over to the sarcophagus and place the mirror of Itikar in the hands of the dead queen.

As you do so, a bright light flares

behind you, the columns casting long shadows across the floor. You turn and see a tall, slender woman glowing in the darkness like a candle flame; Libra, goddess of justice. Her light illuminates the dark tomb and you become aware of the paintings that adorn the walls around you.

For a brief moment, you see life as it must have been lived two thousand years before your birth. A reed boat sails upon the lake; fishermen struggle to pull up a net containing a huge fish with scales of brilliant blue, while waterbirds spread their wings across the stone sky. Seated upon a throne of painted gold, Queen Itikar presides majestically over the scene, surrounded by her Shield Maidens. The warriors seem to turn their white faces towards you.

Then the light grows brighter; the brilliant paintings fade from view and, when you can open your eyes again, it is to look upon the pale glow of dawn. You are lying on a straw pallet in your room. Through the open window you can hear the familiar sounds of the cityport waking up: orclings bickering on their way to school, the rumble of carts going to market and, in the distance, the cries of gulls over the River Jabaji. Someone passing in the street below curses loudly; his gold has been stolen. You have come home.



Seas of Blood

Every form of vice and illicit activity is not only permitted, but even encouraged, in this city of scum.

Although pirates had featured in *City of Thieves*, *Island of the Lizard King* and *Temple of Terror*, they only had incidental non-player-character roles. In *Seas of Blood*, Andrew Chapman's third foray into *Fighting Fantasy* and his first fantasy-themed title, they take centre stage. What's more, in *Seas of Blood* you take on the role of a pirate, and this is one of the few *Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks where the hero is not a good guy. Much of the adventure consists of raiding other ships, cities and settlements, and taking gold and slaves in an effort to become the infamous 'King of Pirates' and 'Sacker of Cities'. Hardly the behaviour of a moral individual, but enormous fun as a gamebook nonetheless!

Seas of Blood has an atmosphere which is unique amongst *Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks, mixing as it does elements of ancient Mesopotamia, Greek Myth and the Arabian Nights with other weird, wonderful and fantastical elements from the depths of Chapman's imagination. The fascinating world which forms the backdrop to this adventure was, unfortunately, never visited again in the *Fighting Fantasy* series, but it was used, in a somewhat different guise, as the setting for Andrew Chapman's non-*Fighting Fantasy* novel, *Ashkar the Magnificent* and was to be the setting for two proposed (but unwritten and unpublished) *Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks, *Deathlord* and *The Wailing World*.

"The Fact of Fiction" is a series of articles designed to take a deeper look at the information presented in a *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook, whether it be in-jokes, goofs, continuity with other gamebooks, the background to the creation of the book, or similar things. In many ways it is to act like a DVD commentary for the book, telling you things that you might not have already known.

The Map

❖ The distinctive map of the lands of the Inland Sea is an important guide to your adventure, showing all the chief locations of interest in the region. The same map is given in *Ashkar the Magnificent* (labelled 'The Lands of the Inland Sea') with the following differences: the Parine River is called the River Parine; the Shoals, Trysta, the Channel of Goth, The Roc, the Barbarians, the Delta, and Southern Sea are not named; the wall to the west of Kish is named 'The Wall of Walls'; and the extreme southern edge of the map, including the island of Nippur, is not shown. Many of the names in the Inland Sea are taken from ancient Mesopotamia (Assyria and Sumeria), and several of them feature in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (the earliest material of which dates from 2150~2000 BC), one of the earliest pieces of literature known to us. These names give the Inland Sea a unique identity and atmosphere in *Fighting Fantasy* (but, as noted above, Andrew Chapman opted for names of a very different sort for *Ashkar the Magnificent*).

❖ The neutral city of Assur on the western shore of the Inland Sea is named after the capital of ancient Assyria in Mesopotamia. In *Ashkar*, the captain of the Banshee, Starg,

visits Assur to enlist the aid of the Kajn Lizard Men, and the river which flows inland from the city is named the Uphom.

❖ Calah is the name of another ancient Assyrian city (also called Nimrud). In *Ashkar*, the inhabitants of Calah, the Calahites, are described as having copper skin.

❖ The strategically important Channel of Goth, between the Isle of Volcanoes and the eastern coast of the Inland Sea, is probably named after the Germanic tribes of the same name. The name Goth appears once in *Ashkar the Magnificent* (p.91), where it is said of Ashkar, in reference to his mighty power, that "the power and strength of his nature swept from him like the fire of Goth". Is this a reference to the volcanoes which flank the western shore of the Channel of Goth, or to some god of the Inland Sea who has given his name to this fiery region?

❖ Little is said of the Dead City in *Seas of Blood* (or *Ashkar*), but it plays a pivotal role in the Spawning of Chaos in Khul, as detailed in *Titan*, and was to be the location for Andrew Chapman's unpublished *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook, *Deathlord*.¹

❖ Kazallu, the island in the Southern Sea inhabited by a beautiful young witch, is named after the ancient Babylonian city of the same name (also spelt Kazalla).

❖ Kirkuk is named after the city of the same name in Mesopotamia. Kirkuk has a long history, from the days of ancient Assyria to the modern state of Iraq.

❖ The mighty city of Kish is another location in *Seas of Blood* named after an ancient Mesopotamian city (the modern Tell al-Uhaymir in Iraq), which featured in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Although the city of Kish itself does not feature in *Ashkar the Magnificent*, Kishian Archimandrites such as Mengg comb the Inland Sea in search of virgins for their Isostatic Rite.

❖ Lagash, at the mouth of the Parine River, is likewise named after an ancient Sumerian city of Mesopotamia. In *Ashkar*, the great

¹ <http://fightingfantasy.wikia.com/wiki/Deathlord/>

All at sea, **WARREN MCGUIRE** scouts the vast Inland Sea in a small wooden dinghy for treasure of the knowledge variety...

FURTHER INFORMATION

golden city of Lagash is the centre of the Lagashian Empire, ruled over by the autocrats Ashkar and his brother Morkain. Interestingly, Lagash was to be the location of Paul Mason's unpublished (planned but unwritten) *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook, *The Wailing World*.²

❖ Marad, the city on the eastern shore of the Inland Sea, is also named after an ancient Sumerian city of Mesopotamia (also called Marda).

❖ Mount Martu-Amurru is named after the deity of the Amorite (Amurru) people of ancient Mesopotamia, who was called both Martu and Amurru.

❖ The island of Nippur, home to the fearsome Cyclops, is another location named after a place in ancient Mesopotamia, in this case the Sumerian city of the same name.

❖ The Parine River (called the River Parine in *Ashkar*) is possibly named after the Iraqi personal name 'Parine'. In *Ashkar*, it is the central artery of the great Lagashian Empire, with settlements such as Mantou, Aut Haat, Uffle, Embre and Kul found along its length.

❖ The Rivers of the Dead, in the Eastern Rim of the lands of the Inland Sea, are likely inspired by

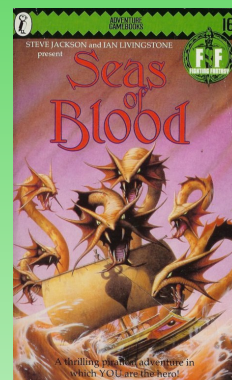
Styx, the River of the Dead in Greek mythology.

❖ The Scythia Desert, home to the Lizard Men (called the 'Kajn' in *Ashkar*), appears to be a blend of two Greek names – Scythia, the Greek name for a large tract of inner Asia, and Cythera (modern Kythira), an island off the southern tip of mainland Greece.

❖ Shurrupak is named after the ancient Sumerian city Shuruppak (note the spelling difference) in Mesopotamia.

❖ The pirate city of Tak is probably named after one or more of a number of places with the same name in the real world, for example the town and province Tak in Thailand, the town Tak in Azerbaijan, or the historical kingdom of Tak (Taank) in India. In *Ashkar*, the city of Tak, with its towering granite bay (just as in *Seas of Blood*) is, to all intents and purposes, ruled over by the pirate lord Lolfant the Interminable.

❖ The Three Sisters island group is probably named after one or both of the following: (1) a rock formation in the Blue Mountains in New South Wales, Australia (see photo below); (2) a group of three islands in Torres Strait in Queensland,



AUTHOR: ANDREW CHAPMAN

INTERIOR ARTIST:

BOB HARVEY

PUBLISHED:

JULY 25 1985

PUBLISHER: PUFFIN

GAMEBOOK NUMBER: 16

COVER ARTIST:

RODNEY MATTHEWS

AVAILABILITY:

OUT OF PRINT.

Australia. The Australian connection is understandable given that Andrew Chapman comes from that country.

² http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/fighting_fantasy_gamebooks/message/1989



The Wager

❖ Abdul the Butcher is one of several names in *Seas of Blood* of an Arabic type, and is probably named after the brutal professional wrestler, Abdullah the Butcher (also called “The Madman from the Sudan”, real name Lawrence Shreve (b.1941) from Ontario, Canada - see photo below). A fitting model for the wannabe King of Pirates!



❖ As captain of the pirate ship *Banshee*, YOU must travel through the lands of the Inland Sea in search of riches in your bid to claim the title of Sacker of Cities. Under your command are a bunch of cut-throats and ne'er-do-wells. These, your crew, are represented in game terms by two statistics which aren't found in any other *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook: CREW STRIKE and CREW STRENGTH. These work in much the same way as SKILL and STAMINA but are used in large-scale battles and in battles against massive single opponents.

❖ The captain of the *Banshee* is also one of the central characters in *Ashkar the Magnificent* (2000). Named Starg, he is an unwholesome character, dressed in a cape of Human skin and ready to kill his crew for raping his female slaves, not because he cares about the poor girls themselves but because he recognises the value of virgins to the nefarious Kishian Archimandrites. Although he acknowledges Lolfant the Interminable, de facto ruler of Tak, as his superior, it is Starg who is instrumental in the gathering of forces to attack their common enemy – Morkain, Autocrat of Lagash.

1

Abdul the Butcher's Haveldar cuts quietly through the water beside you.

❖ It seems likely that Chapman named Abdul the Butcher's ship, the *Haveldar*, after the military rank

Havildar (رادلوج - roughly equivalent to sergeant) in the armies of the Maratha Empire in India, the imperial British Indian army, and the armies of modern India and Pakistan.

40

The jungle has come alive with the throat warbles and Tok-Tok stick signals of the natives.

❖ The Tok-Tok stick signals were probably inspired by the Malaysian Chinese dish Wan Than Mee (see photo above for one of the many varieties), also called Tok-tok Mee, so named because the vendors advertised their presence in the food markets of Penang by knocking together bamboo sticks, making a hollow tok-tok noise.

42

Hundreds of tree-trunk legs support a body twice as long as the Banshee, while its head – which is mostly mouth – is stacked with knives for teeth.

❖ The appropriately named The Horror is one of a number of huge, hostile creatures encountered on your travels through the lands of the Inland Sea. What manner of beast it is and what kind of SKILL or STAMINA is might have (I quake at the thought!) are thankfully unknown. Suffice it to say that with a (CREW) STRIKE score of 12 and a (CREW) STRENGTH score of 12, it is one of the most fearsome enemies you may encounter in *Seas of Blood*.

63

The creature has a roughly humanoid body, but the head and legs of some twisted bird.

❖ The Awkmute is the only one of



its kind encountered in *Fighting Fantasy*. What manner of creature it is is unknown – its name suggests that it might be incapable of vocalisation and that it might be related to the family of birds called Auks (which includes Guillemots and Puffins), although the picture of it does not fit this interpretation particularly well.

76

Presently, you arrive off the northernmost tip of the mountainous isle of Enraki, home of the warrior priests of Asswr sel Dablo.

❖ The name of Asswr sel Dablo, the monastery of the Priests of Enraki in the Inland Sea, is not found outside of *Fighting Fantasy*, but has a familiar look to it, since Asswr is not very different from Assur, and sel Dablo looks like Spanish del Diablo ‘of the devil’.

77

Adventurers, know that you are in the land of the King of the Four Winds and that his majesty requests the pleasure of your company at his table.

❖ The King of the Four Winds, with his sacks containing the north, east, south and west winds, is based on Aeolus of Greek mythology. As Keeper of the Four Winds in Homer's *Odyssey* (c.8th Century BC), Aeolus



Ashkar the Magnificent and the Lands of the Inland Sea

The lands of the Inland Sea first appeared in the *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook, *Seas of Blood*, written by Andrew Chapman and published in 1985. Nothing in *Seas of Blood* indicated a connection between these lands and any other *Fighting Fantasy* setting, which is perhaps not surprising as the world of Titan was first referred to in *Sword of the Samurai*, published in April 1986, and was first revealed in detail in *Titan – The Fighting Fantasy World*, published in October 1986. In that book, the lands of the Inland Sea were placed in the continent of Khul in Titan, and Andrew Chapman was thanked for his contribution to the *Fighting Fantasy* world in the acknowledgements at the front of *Titan*. This placement of the lands of the Inland Sea in Khul was not unproblematic, however, since it was not Chapman's original intention that the lands of the Inland Sea should be included in the world of Titan. Chapman revealed on the Rebuilding Titan Yahoo! group that he "had created a more extensive geography and history for that world which I used later in two other books, and also in the unpublished *FF Deathlord*".¹ One of these other two books is *Ashkar the Magnificent*, which contains the same map as *Seas of Blood*. The other is the unpublished *Darksoul*.²

Ashkar the Magnificent is a novel set in the lands of the Inland Sea which tells the story of the confrontation between the brothers Ashkar and Morkain, Autocrats of the Lagashian Empire, and the adventures of the mysterious girl L'lan, the sentient sword Prax, and Starg, the Captain of the pirate ship *Banshee* from the notorious city of Tak. The setting of *Ashkar* is at once familiar and strange to those who have played *Seas of Blood*. The places detailed on the map in *Seas of Blood* are all there, and elements such as the Kishain Winged Hussars and the pirate ship *Banshee* are common to both. Indeed, the captain of the *Banshee* himself takes centre stage in both books, but whether Chapman intended them to be the same individual is unknown!

But unlike *Seas of Blood*, with its Mesopotamian and Arabesque nomenclature and culture, the lands of the Inland Sea in *Ashkar* are full of peoples, places and things with exotic sounding names of an entirely different sort, more reminiscent of Jack Vance's Dying Earth setting. It seems likely that Chapman, finding his lands of the Inland Sea co-opted into the *Fighting Fantasy* world, Titan, continued to use the setting for his own adventures whilst making an effort to distinguish them from the *Fighting Fantasy* version of the region. So the lands of the Inland Sea and its peoples exist in two places at once, in Khul and in another world (called 'Earth' by Chapman in *Ashkar*), two alternate versions of the same fantastical vision.

1 http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/Rebuilding_Titan/message/503

2 <http://andrew-e-chapman.blogspot.com/2011/09/on-writing-ashkar-magnificent.html>



gives Odysseus and his crew a bag containing all winds but the west wind to aid them in their journey home, a plan which goes awry when Odysseus's crew open the bag as they approach Ithaca.

92

Looking up, you see an enormous bird, somewhat like a buzzard, only several hundred times bigger.

❖ The giant Roc (see picture on the previous page) of the island of the same name is taken from Arabic mythology (in Arabic it is called *rokh*: رخ). In *One Thousand and One Nights* (ألف ليلة وليلة) nights 543 and 544, Sinbad the Sailor climbs to a Roc's nest and escapes by tying himself to the giant bird's legs with his turban.

108

You go to the farmhouse and meet the owner, a strikingly beautiful young woman who runs the entire place by herself, her only company being many (and varied) exotic birds and the usual farm animals.

❖ The young witch, whose bread and soup transforms your crew (and perhaps even you) into animals, is obviously based on the witch Circe, who works similar magic on the crew of Odysseus's ship in Homer's *Odyssey*.

120

Suddenly, the ocean around the island bubbles ferociously as enormous limbs, tails and heads rise out of the water. The 'island' is a single living creature!

❖ The tale of an 'island' which turns out to be an enormous sea creature is familiar from Greek and medieval mythology, where it is called Aspidochelone or names derived from that, e.g. Fastitocalon (which also appeared in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*). It also occurs in the *First Voyage of Sinbad* in *One Thousand and One Nights* (nights 538 and 539). One wonders whether the enormous, plesiosaur-like sea creature which performs this role in *Seas of Blood* might be one of the Coelacanths, summoned from the depths by Ashkar to swallow the pirate ships of Tak (*Ashkar the Magnificent*, p.86).

121

Further down the street in which you were fighting, you can see a large number of Kishian Winged Hussars mustering in deeply packed ranks.

❖ The Kishian Winged Hussars are named after the heavy cavalry of the Polish army between the 16th and 18th centuries. It is not indicated in *Seas of Blood* that the Kishian Hussars are mounted, although you can encounter Kishian cavalry (para. 141). In *Ashkar the Magnificent* (p.82), a group of fifty Winged Hussars is termed a flight, and it appears that they can be hired as mercenaries.

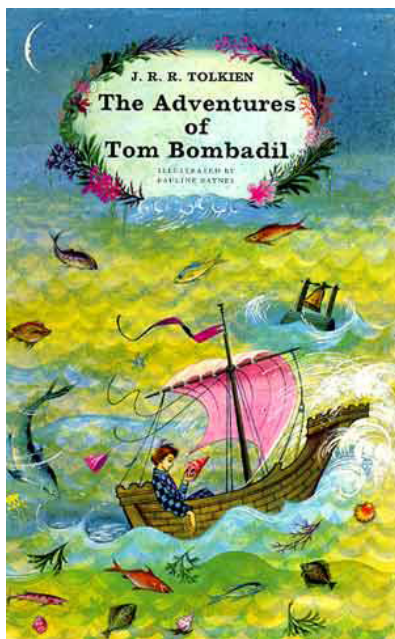
168

Sitting on the irregular floor, its insanely complicated limbs folded about a spiked shell, is the Krell.

❖ The Krell is a large, intelligent, marine crustacean of the deeps of the Inland Sea. They are not to be confused with the six-limbed primates of the same name, found swinging through the trees in the jungles of Titan! The name Krell brings to mind the tiny crustaceans krill, which form an important part of the oceanic food-chain. It is also the name of an extinct race of advanced beings in the science fiction film *Forbidden Planet* (1956).

194

After just one day, a caravan of enormous ochre-coloured octopedal



beasts shambles over a ridge and into sight. The heavy pack-animals are guarded by a dozen Lizard Men who, high in their wooden saddles, survey the surroundings with some suspicion.

❖ The nature of the beasts ridden by the Lizard Men is unknown. In *Ashkar the Magnificent*, the steeds of the Lizard Men are not mentioned, although the massive, lumbering Gunderwals, which act as beast of burden, might possibly be the same creatures (*Ashkar*, p. 51-2).
❖ Published in 1986, Marc Gascoigne's (b.1962) book *Titan – The Fighting Fantasy World* (in "The Lizard Men of the Southern Jungles") makes it clear that the Lizard Men of the Inland Sea, including the pygmy Lizard Men of the jungles, are members of the same species that dominates the swamps and jungles of Allansia, despite the fact that the illustrations of the Lizard Men in



Seas of Blood (184 and 194) don't at all look like their Allansian counterparts.
❖ In *Ashkar the Magnificent*, the Lizard Men are called the Kajn, are described as "blue-tongued reptiles, towering at seven or eight feet in height" (p.47) with skin "composed of gorgeous blue scales" (p.49), and are willing to act as mercenary forces in the assault on Lagash by the pirates of Tak. This description hardly fits with what we know about the Lizardmen of Titan, and is one respect in which Chapman has developed the lands of the Inland Sea in a different direction from that found in *Fighting Fantasy*.

214

The dais is inscribed with the following: AXILLON, WARRIOR SAINT, SLAYER OF DRAGONS.

❖ Who Axillon was and when they lived is unknown. The name Axillon appears to be of a Classical type (Latin *axilla* means 'armpit'), somewhat out of place in the Mesopotamian inspired lands of the Inland Sea.

233

Turning, you see, momentarily, the face of one of your oldest adversaries, Shamit Gawel Nestafa.

❖ The name of Shamit Gawel Nestafa, another pirate of the Inland Sea, is found only in *Fighting Fantasy*, but appears to be a name of a mock-Arabic type, containing the Arabic personal name Shamit (also found in India), and recalling, for example the name Mustafa (and the -el of Gawel looks like the word for 'the' in Arabic too).

236

In the dicing-dens, you have the misfortune to meet an old creditor, Jiamil el-Fazouk, to whom you owe several thousand Gold Pieces from a past gambling-debt.

❖ The name Jiamil el-Fazouk is another mock-Arabic name of a sort used by Chapman to give the lands of the Inland Sea in *Seas of Blood* its Middle-eastern atmosphere (but not used at all in *Ashkar the Magnificent*). The name looks very like the genuine Arabic name Jamal el-Farouk, for example.

237

It is Ali Mitok sen el-Shazar, a wealthy noble of Shurrupak.

❖ Ali Mitok sen el-Shazar is another Arabesque name. Ali is a common Arabic first name, *el* is the Arabic word for 'the', and Shazar is a place and personal name used throughout the Arab world.

270

The Bataar races are conducted on a long sandy stretch between the wharfs and the city.

❖ The large racing-lizard Bataars are named after *Tabarosaurus bataar*, a species of tyrannosaurid theropod dinosaur of the late Cretaceous period (bataar because their fossils have been found in Mongolia, the capital of which is Ulaan Bataar). This suggests that the Bataar of the lands of the Inland Sea aren't lizards at all, but are a kind of Khulian dinosaur instead.

❖ Several of the names of the Bataar lizards (el-Savak, Fazima, Omar Shazi and Wazi Biin) are Arabic or mock Arabic names of a sort used by Chapman to give the lands of the Inland Sea a Middle-eastern flavour.

281

All around the edge of the lid is an inscription, repeated over and over, which reads: UT-NAPISHTIM KEEPER OF THE WATERS OF RETRIBUTION.

❖ Ut-Napishtim is named after the immortal flood hero, Utnapishtim (or Uta-napishtim) of the Sumerian and Akkadian *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Who Ut-Napishtim was in the lands of the Inland Sea is unknown, but the connection with the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is emphasised by his title 'Keeper of the Waters of Retribution'.

284

Creeping forward, you see four Troglodytes emerging from a small side-passage on to the stairs.

❖ At least two kinds of Troglodytes are encountered in *Fighting Fantasy*: the small subterranean, goblin-like creatures described in *Titan – The Fighting Fantasy World*, and the bizarre crested creatures from beyond the Portal of Evil (*Portal of Evil*, Peter Darvill-Evans: 319). Although it seems unlikely that the Troglodytes in the lands of the Inland Sea are the type from beyond the Portal, their SKILL (7-9) and STAMINA (4-6) values seem rather too high for the regular sort (*Out of the Pit* from 1985 gives typical SKILL 5, STAMINA 4). Perhaps they are a bigger breed of Troglodyte,

or some other subterranean creature altogether?

298

When you reach the bottom, you see that you are in a dimly lit cavern occupied by a Cyclops.

❖ Your fight against the Cyclops at the culmination of *Seas of Blood* is unique amongst *Fighting Fantasy* battles in that it makes no reference to either of your SKILL scores. Instead you must make a series of decisions about the best way to attack parts of the Cyclops' body.

❖ Cyclops are a feature of Greek mythology, in this case most obviously a reference to Polyphemus in Homer's *Odyssey*.

315

I have heard that there is to be an assault on your citadel by the Wazi of Lagash, whose masters are pressing him for increased revenue.

❖ Although the Wazi of Lagash is only mentioned in a tale you concoct to hoodwink the Abbot of Enraki, we can assume that the Wazi of Lagash was an actual person in the lands of the Inland Sea, otherwise your story would not make any sense. As for who the Wazi of Lagash is, that is unknown, but given the Middle-eastern theme of *Seas of Blood*, it is not too much of a stretch to compare it with the Arabic and Persian Wazir (or Vizier), a high-ranking minister in the government.

❖ Although Lagash plays a central role in *Ashkar the Magnificent*, no Wazi of Lagash is mentioned. However, the autocrat (leader) of Lagash, Morkain, is served by a Vizier called Shagtran (*Ashkar*, p.112-3), and we can assume that this is the same office of state.

316

Two giants, small by their brethren's standards, no doubt, but enormous by yours, step over the ridge ahead.

❖ Mog and Ogmog, the two Giants of the land of the Muzzelmires, are clearly inspired by the biblical names Gog and Magog. Applied to various places and peoples, in the final book of *The Bible, Revelation*, Gog and Magog are instruments of Satan and enemies of God's people, and in medieval times (for example in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* from c.1136) Gogmagog was a giant who was slain

by the Cornish hero Corin.

320

Where in Albion would you find that which lies between above and below?

❖ The name Albion appears to be used in *Seas of Blood* (216, 320) to refer to the (known) world (it does not appear in *Ashkar the Magnificent*). Albion is an ancient name for the island of Britain (the element *alb-* means 'white' and perhaps refers to the white cliffs of Dover), and survives in the Scottish Gaelic name for Scotland, Alba.

327

They are Elverines – blind and grossly distorted man-eating, fresh-water serpents.

❖ *Titan – The Fighting Fantasy World* (large format p.68, small format p.146) makes a curious statement which may concern the vicious Elverines of the lands of the Inland Sea. It states that "The peculiar Elvins of the Shamutanti Hills in Kakhabad (the small, Elf-like creatures, not the large sea monsters of the Inland Sea, which have the same name) certainly profess to worship the Trickster". But in *Seas of Blood*, the only creatures with a similar name are the Elverines, and they are described as being "fresh-water serpents". So either *Titan* is wrong on two counts (the name and the habitat), or it is referring to some entirely different creature which doesn't appear (or isn't named) in *Seas of Blood* (or *Ashkar the Magnificent*).

333

A tremendous bubbling froth boils around the ship. Out of this emerge several reptilian heads on long necks, all attached to one bloated black body. It is a Hydra!

❖ The Hydra is another creature from Greek mythology (encountered in the labours of Heracles) which also appears elsewhere in *Fighting Fantasy* (in Steve Jackson's *The Citadel of Chaos* (1983) and in *The Crown of Kings* (1985)). This specimen, which also depicted in stylised fashion on the front cover of *Seas of Blood*, is so big and powerful that it is given STRIKE and STRENGTH scores rather than the usual SKILL and STAMINA statistics!

FF

THE CURSE OF MERAKI

BY STUART LLOYD

ILLUSTRATED BY MICHAEL WOLMARANS

This adventure is for 3~6 starting adventurers. It is an investigation as to what is causing a curse over a small fishing village and hopefully to clear the name of an innocent woman. This adventure is not all about combat and clever investigation is more valuable than muscle in this adventure. Indeed, if the heroes do well, they could achieve complete success in this adventure with only one combat. Bearing this in mind, skills like con, etiquette and bargain are just as important as combat training. The heroes have some money left over from a guard duty job. Each of them may begin with 25 + 4d6 Gold Pieces and 4d6 Silver Pieces.

The curse is actually caused by an angry sea sprite that has had its ring stolen, but a local wise woman has been accused of witchcraft by scared villagers and she will be executed. The best way to win this adventure is to find the ring and return it to the sea.

THE PROLOGUE

It's been a week since you have left the cesspit of Port Blacksand and pickings are slim. After a month of traipsing across the Pagan Plains to guard a caravan of merchants on their journey to the deadly port, you want edsome adventure. However, you got a bit too much adventure in Blacksand after one of you spilt a flagon of ale all over one of the city's master assassins. Two minutes later, you were sprinting through the streets with a dozen highly trained killers close behind you. You got to the south gate, only to be stopped by the Troll guards demanding a fishday tax. Too desperate to argue, you hand over most your money to avoid the sharp

blades of the Assassins' Guild. You have just arrived to the small fishing village of Meraki, eager for a hot meal and a comfortable bed. However, you can see that something is wrong. The villagers look sad and downtrodden. No one looks you in the eye as you walk through the streets to the market square. You get to an inn and ask the keeper for some food and drink. He serves it without a word. While you are eating your dinner, an old but well kempt and muscular man approaches you. 'Good evening. My name is Grask. I am the headman of this village and we need your help. I will offer you a free bed for the next few nights and some gold if you can solve our woes. I fear that there is a curse upon our little village and now an innocent woman's life hangs in the balance...

Now that the heroes are hooked (hopefully), let's see what they need to do.

INTRODUCTORY RULES

Time Slots

There are four time slots in the day. The heroes can visit one place in the morning, one in the afternoon, one in the evening and one place at night. The heroes may not be able to visit some places at certain times of day and they may see something different if they go at a different time. Grask has kindly allowed the heroes to stay at his place and sleep on the floor which is what they may want to do



at with a time slot, instead of visit anywhere. If they do, they can regain 4 STAMINA points. If they do not sleep at all for a whole day (four time slots), then they will lose 3 STAMINA points. The heroes can eat at any point and restore 2 STAMINA points per meal (regaining a maximum of 4 STAMINA points per day) but they will lose 2 STAMINA points if they do not eat for a whole day (four time slots).

If the word available is in the box (see table below), then the heroes can go there at that time of day. If the word unavailable is in the box, then the heroes cannot go there – in the case of the temple and tavern, they are closed and in the case of the market, the traders have packed up.

The docks and Randolph Carter's house present different scenarios depending on the time of day the heroes visit them. These are explained

in the scenes.

The heroes start their adventure on the evening of Windsday, where they will have their meeting with Grask, the headman. They have until Highday evening to solve the case or Old Bess will be executed. That gives them, Windsday night (one time slot), all of Seaday (four time slots) and most of Highday (three time slots) to solve the mystery. The heroes have a total of 8 time slots to visit places if they do not sleep and 6 if they do. *Of course*, they may also want to split up to cover more ground.

Combat in this Adventure

Most of the people the heroes encounter in this book are law abiding villagers and town guards. If, for some reason, the heroes end up fighting them then they should be warned that killing an inhabitant

of the village will lead to them being chased out of the village and hunted down by the authorities.

Normal villagers are unarmed and will flee as soon as it looks nasty. If they start a fight, then they will flee if their STAMINA is reduced to 4 or less. No villager wears armour or carries a weapon.

Town guards wear leather hauberks and fight to the death, but the heroes can attempt to knock them out if they reduce their STAMINA to 4 or less. They have to fight at -1 to attack strength, but the next hit will knock them out so that they will come to in 2-12 minutes.

The only beings that the authorities don't mind the heroes killing are the smugglers in scene 8, the Sea Sprite and tentacles it summons in scene 9.

Time of day	Market (scene 2)	Temple (scene 3)	Gaol (scene 4)	Tavern (scene 5)	Docks (scene 6)	Carter (scene 7)	Caves (scene 8)
Morn.	Available	Available	Available	Unavailable	Available	Available*	Available
After.	Available	Available	Available	Available	Available	Available*	Available
Even.	Available	Available	Available	Available	Available†	Available*	Available
Night	Unavailable	Unavailable	Available	Available	Available†	Available**	Available
* house is empty ** house is occupied † the heroes will see strange lights							

GRAHAM'S THOUGHTS

The *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* adventure competition, the winner of which is announced in this issue of *Fighting Fantazine*, was a veritable pleasure to judge. The standard of entries was extremely high, and choosing the ultimate winner therefore very difficult.

The entries covered a range of adventure types, from the investigative to the classic dungeon crawl, all of which evoked the very essence of *Fighting Fantasy*. The winner – *The Curse of Meraki* – is a subtle blend of investigation, roleplaying and fighting, set around a cursed fishing village. Like the best gamebooks, there is a "perfect solution", requiring the

minimum of SKILL, dice rolls or fighting, although unlike the gamebooks you don't get a second run through! I was impressed with the writing style, attention to detail and layout that will help the Director run the adventure. An all round great effort!

Even those that did not win were very impressive, and I am hoping these will also be available to all shortly via the website.

Well done to all entrants, and enjoy the books!



SCENE 1: THE SUMMONS

Location: The headman's hut in a village in Oyster Bay.

Plot Summary: The heroes meet with Grask the headman and discover that the village has a lot of problems.

Cast List

Grask: Grask the headman is a large, muscular ex fisherman. His wrinkled, weather beaten face betrays worry and his eyes are baggy through lack of sleep. Grask lives with his wife (who is out) in a modest cottage near the centre of the village and is well liked by the villagers as he is a considerate and generous man.

GRASK SKILL 8 STAMINA 15
LUCK 11

Special Skills: Fishing (10), Sea Lore (11), Leadership (10), Etiquette (9), Con (9), World Lore (9), Swim (10), Religion Lore (9), Bargain (9)
Social Scale: 6

Action!

The heroes approach the door and give it a knock. A worried looking Grask answers the door and beckons them in. He introduces himself and asks them to take a seat around his table, where he serves each hero a bowl of fish stew.

Thank you for responding to my request. Our little village has come across some hard times recently. We get most of our money from the fishing trade but over the past week, no one has caught a single fish. A lot of the people got desperate and hungry and started looking for someone to blame. Now a woman called Bess has been accused of witchcraft and she will be executed if I cannot prove her innocence. I know that she is innocent. She is a kindly old woman who taught me much and told me many stories as a child. She has lived here all of her life and knows nothing of witchcraft. However, she is an old eccentric lady and the villagers have blamed her. She is currently locked up in the gaol to stop the villagers tearing her from limb to limb. However, the curse no longer extends to a lack of fish. People are turning against each other, accusing each other of fighting and causing havoc in the village. Seemingly sober people are becoming blind drunk at all hours. A fog of despair is falling on my village.

My request is that you find the source of this curse and put an end to it before an innocent woman dies and people start to starve. I don't know where to start, but maybe you could pick up rumours from the tavern and the market or from the militia in the gaol or Talis, our priest of Hydana. Bess will be executed on the day after tomorrow at dusk. For tonight, rest, and I will answer any questions you may have.

Grask knows very little beyond what he has said. He can tell the heroes that Bess's husband is a fisherman called Tom and that he is spending a lot of time in the tavern along with many other despairing fishers. Grask cannot offer a greater reward than 100 Gold Pieces per hero and he will get very angry if the heroes try to bargain with him. He may even drop the fee.

Problems?

If the heroes refuse, then remind them that they are heroes and a life hangs in the balance. *If the heroes do not believe in the curse, you could spring a few surprises on them in the market later.*

Turn to...

It is now night and the heroes do not know about Randolph Carter or the

caves yet, so the heroes have four options. They could go to the gaol (scene 4), the tavern (scene 5) or the docks (scene 6). The fourth option is to get some sleep now and then in the morning, they could go to the market (scene 2), the temple (scene 3), the gaol (scene 4), the tavern (scene 5) or the docks (scene 6).

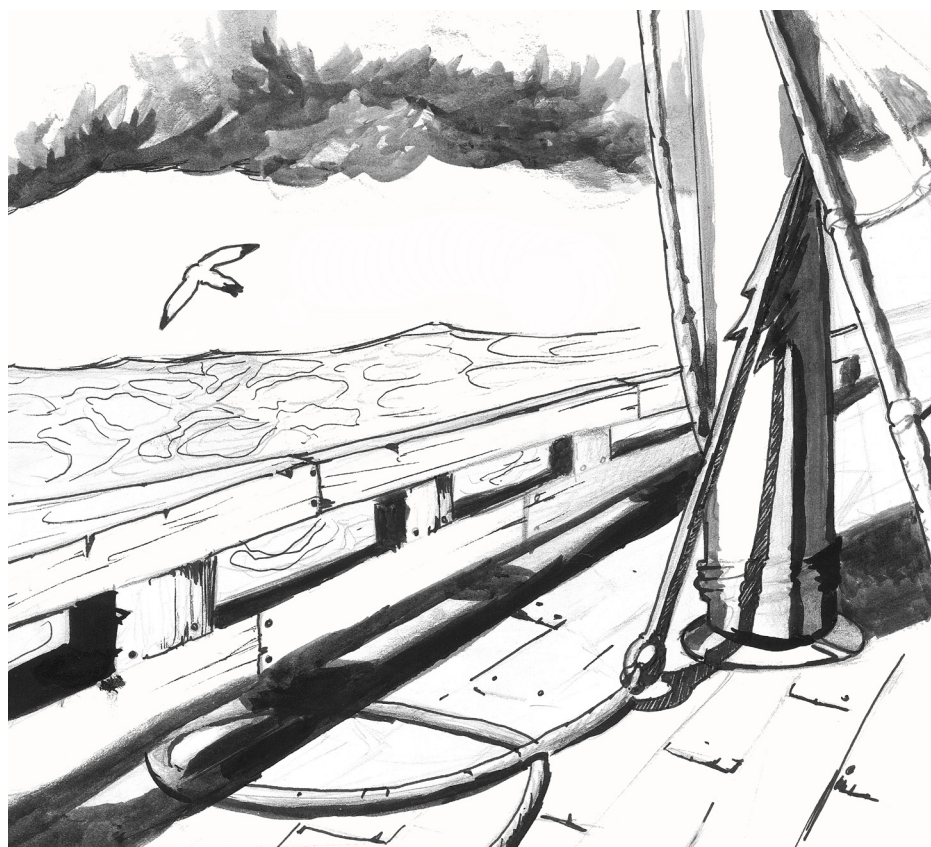
SCENE 2: THE MARKET

Location: The market is in a large square in the centre of the village. It is full of shouting merchants selling their wares and villagers looking for a good deal.

Plot Summary: The heroes come across some village personalities, buy some goods and may become victims of the curse.

Cast List

Randolph Carter: Randolph Carter is originally from the village but at a young age decided that he wanted finer things in life than to become a fisherman so he is now a social climber and dealer in pretty jewellery. He is feeling pretty smug at the moment as he recently bought a nice ring off Tom the fisherman for an extremely cheap price. He looks forward to selling it in Blacksand as the green glow from the gem is



starting to unnerve him.

RANDOLPH

CARTER SKILL 6 STAMINA 6
LUCK 9

Special Skills: Bargain (9), Con (9), Sea Lore (8), World Lore (8), Etiquette (8), Languages (8)
Social Scale: 4
Dagger

The Sea Sprite: Sea Sprites live beneath the waves and have little to do with the affairs of humans. Occasionally, on a whim, they may surface and use their magic on Humans for amusement. Most of the time, it causes inconvenience. For example, they can create the noise of a storm approaching or spill a barrel of water. Lucky Humans receive some kind of benefit such as a weather improver spell or even a LUCK spell. However, the reasons for this are beyond the understanding of mortals. This Sea Sprite, however, has turned hostile because of the loss of its magic ring. It has been searching the village under the invisibility spell until it gets frustrated and angry. Then it does things such as make a villager blind drunk or make the weather worse, or create a clap of thunder and a flash. It has also been leading the fish away from where the fishing fleet usually goes. This is now causing problems in the village as its main source of food and income has vanished over the period of a week. People are starting to get desperate, which is what led them to blame Old Bess for their misfortune. The Sprite is the cause of the mischief and chaos in the market square which is leading to villagers arguing and falling out with each other.

SEA SPRITE SKILL 10 STAMINA 16
LUCK 12

Special Skills: Swim (14), Sea Lore (14), Magic (14), Languages (12), Minor Magic (14), Dodge (12), Hide (12), Sneak (12)
Spells: Befuddle, Flash, Illusion, Light, Luck, Stamina, Thunder, Tongue Twister, Breathe, Fog, Mirror Selves, Grand Illusion, Invisibility, Speak to Animals, Weather Control, Fly, Summon Animals.
Minor Spells: Glimmer, Hold, Inebriate, Instil, Mistake, Noises Off!, Pied Piper, Pucker, Push, Slip, Sour, Weather Improver

Dagger

Summon Animals: Requires 4 STAMINA points. This spell summons a creature or creatures to aid you in combat or act as messengers. They will be typical animals for the environment they are in.

Strong-arms: There is one strong-arm per hero. Two of them will be prominent at Randolph's stall, but the rest will be discrete in the area.

STRONGARM SKILL 7 STAMINA 11
LUCK 6

Special Skills: Sword (8), Strength (8), Ride (8), Hunting (8), Flatland Lore (8), World Lore (8), Awareness (8)
Social Scale: 2
Sword

Guards from the city watch: These guards anxiously watch over the proceedings of the day as the boredom of people who know that they have very little crime to deal with has turned into paranoia over who may just do something unpredictable and out of character.

GUARD SKILL 7 STAMINA 10
LUCK 9

Special Skills: Sea Lore (9), Swim (9), Sword (8), Javelin (8), Law (8), Ride (8)
Social Scale: 2
Sword, Javelin

Villagers: These villagers browse goods and ply their trades in the market stall. They fall into five groups:

Artisans: These villagers are folk who do not fish or trade for a living. They could be any trade that appears in the poor business table on page 89 of *Blacksand!*, such as baker, cobbler, sail maker etc.

ARTISAN SKILL 6 STAMINA 8
LUCK 7

Special Skills: Sea Lore (8), Swim (8), (Craft) Lore (9)
Social scale: 1~2

Merchants: These villagers are loudly hawking their wares at market stalls or from the back of their caravans.

MERCHANT SKILL 6 STAMINA 7
LUCK 8

Special Skills: Sea Lore (7), Bargain

(8), Con (8)
Social scale: 2~4

Fishermen: These villagers are either enjoying some time off from the still, fishless waters or desperately seeking the cheapest food possible as their finances dwindle through lack of catches.

FISHERMAN SKILL 6 STAMINA 10
LUCK 8

Special Skills: Sea Lore (8), Swim (8), Fishing (8),
Social scale: 1~2

Beggars: A few beggars grab the arms of passersby and demand money to help with their (probably made up) ailments.

BEGGAR SKILL 6 STAMINA 8
LUCK 9

Special Skills: Disguise (8), Con (8), Sea Lore (7), Swim (7)
Social scale: 0

Old men/women: Retired artisans and fishermen are looking for goods for their evening's dinner.

OLD MAN /
WOMAN SKILL 5 STAMINA 5
LUCK 9

Special Skills: Sea Lore (8), Swim (8), Fishing (8) or (Craft) Lore (8), Con (7),
Social scale: 1

Props: You could pile a load of fish in front of you and wear a leather jacket and a cork life jacket to make you look like a fisherman.

Action!

Several things could happen while the heroes are ambling through the crowds in the market square. First of all, they get to take in the feeling of gloom and despair that has settled upon this small fishing village. People shuffle from stall to stall, quietly buying the goods they need, not wanting to engage in any conversation or eye contact with even their friends, fearful that they may suddenly do something out of character as so many villagers have done over these past few days.

The heroes can also see several wanted posters for the infamous smuggler, Bartrom, whose head has a

100GP reward on it.

The heroes can also buy a few items that may come in handy from the merchants whose stats are mentioned in the plot list. They may try to do some haggling with them with *opposed bargain checks*.

Item	Price
Oiled leather cloak, trousers, hat and boots (what the fishermen wear out to sea)	15GP
Dagger	2GP
Fishing spear (javelin)	6GP
Backpack	2GP
Blanket, large	4GP
Fresh meal	14SP
Preserved meal	3GP
Lantern	6GP
Oil, pint	1GP
10 metres of rope	15GP
Tinderbox	4GP
Waterskin	18SP

However, other more sinister things may happen...

The Curse

As the heroes are walking through the market, the curse (actually an angry sea sprite casting minor magic spells on people) will strike. The curse may also involve a random villager. In that case, roll a die to find out what villager is involved. Most of the villagers are unarmed and so they should be no match for the heroes, but any hero who strikes a villager with a weapon, then a squad of guards (one per hero) will arrest the offending heroes, throwing them in gaol for the night unless they pay a 20GP fine. If the heroes press their attacks and kill any inhabitant of the villagers or if they obviously use magic on a villager, then they will be chased out of the village and their adventure will be over. To find out what will happen, select a hero at random and roll a die. You may do this as many times as it is entertaining.

1. While the hero is inspecting some item at a stall, a random villager standing near him falls over as if they have been pushed. The angry villager loudly blames the hero as they are the closest

person to them and their raging starts attracting a crowd. The hero needs to placate them somehow.

2. One of the heroes suddenly slips up and lands on a fruit stall sending the fruit flying all over the place. The angry merchant will demand 10GP for ruining his stall. The heroes need to pay up, con their way out or find some other way of getting out of the situation. If their ploy doesn't work, then the merchant will call the guards who take the side of the villager they know who has now exaggerated the event to the point where he is telling everybody that the hero threw the stall over in a fit of rage. If the hero still does not pay, then the guards will throw them in gaol for the night.
3. The next time one of the heroes eats a meal, they will find that it has been spoiled somehow (it has been the target of the sour spell).
4. One of the villagers (selected at random) suddenly starts shouting and staggering around as if they had been drinking several flagons of ale. The villager will decide that they think that the heroes are ugly and try to start a fight with one of them. If the hero decides on unarmed combat or if the others decide to restrain him, then one punch will knock the drunken villager down, and not cause too much fuss. If heroes attack the villager with weapons, then they will be set upon by guards and will have to surrender.
5. While the heroes are walking through the market, they hear the noise of several heavy footfalls followed by shouts to stop. The sounds are closing in on the heroes and villagers moving aside to make way for the imminent arrival of a squad of guards. However, this is just the Noises Off! Spell although the heroes may think that they are being perused. Running will cause a problem as the heroes will have to force their way through the crowd of villagers. Heroes who draw their weapons will be pursued by real guards and in a lot of trouble.
6. While one of the heroes is walking around the market, they

notice something small grabbing their feet and running over them. Looking down, they notice that there are at least a dozen rats nipping at their heels. There are also more rats scampering around on a nearby baker's stall. The angry merchant will call the hero a stinky scurvy rat and demand 10GP for his gods that have been covered in rat wee. The hero could pay up or think of some other way to placate the merchant. If they fail then the merchant will call a squad of guards who will take the local merchant's side and throw the hero in gaol for the night if they don't pay up.

Any heroes who are not at the centre of an incident and who have the awareness skill make a secret check. If they succeed, then they will see the sea sprite darting away from the scene and can *give chase*. If the heroes catch it, then the sprite will use the flying spell to get away. The heroes will see it heading towards the sea. The heroes now know the source of the trouble but it will not be enough to prove the innocence of Bess.

Random villager table:

1. Artisan
2. Fisherman
3. Merchant
4. Beggar
5. Old man/woman
6. Guard

Randolph Carter's stall

Randolph Carter is a greedy jewellery merchant who likes to con the villagers out of their valuables. He is currently showing several pieces on his stall under a glass cabinet, one of them being the Sea Sprite's ring. It has a faint green glow and any character with the magic skill will realise that it is magical on a successful roll against their magic skill score. Randolph will want 250 Gold Pieces for it and drives a tough bargain (if they have been to his house and he demanded another price for it, then the higher price stands). He will not sell the ring below 200 Gold Pieces. If the heroes try to threaten him, then the strong-arms in the crowd will make their presence known. If the heroes attack

him, then they will have to fight the strong-arms for two rounds before the village guards wade in and attempt to arrest the heroes.

Randolph and at least one strong-arm will keep an eye on the glass cabinet so it will take a pretty ingenious diversion to attempt to steal the ring. Randolph will not disclose where he got any of his merchandise from.

Problems?

The main problem is if a hero may start to get violent towards someone. Remind them that even if they are being attacked, that their assailant is a harmless, unarmed villager and that they should not draw their weapons. The watch will tolerate fisticuffs in self defence, but when someone draws a weapon, then they will wade in. Any hero who gets caught wielding a weapon with the intention of attacking will be thrown in gaol for the night.

Turn to...

The heroes could continue their investigations in any number of places.

SCENE 3: THE PRIEST

Location: The temple of Hydana is a modest stone building by the harbour. Outside, by the door, the heroes can see a statue of the sea god with his trident facing the sea as if it is watching over it. The interior of the temple has several images of Hydana, a granite altar and pews made from the hulls of old ships. There is a granite bowl for sailors to leave donations to the sea god. There the temple is empty apart from Talis, the priest of Hydana.

Plot Summary: The heroes visit the priest who gives them some advice and a lot of moaning.

Cast List

Talis the priest: Talis is a local who went to Salaomonis to learn priestly skills. However, he shied away from learning priestly magic as he grew up in a village distrustful of all forms of magic. Finding himself beset by villagers asking for his help and blessing to lift the curse, he finds

himself regretting this decision and feeling increasingly more powerless against this problem.

TALIS SKILL 6 STAMINA 9
LUCK 12

Special Skills: Sea Lore (7), Swim (7), Religion Lore (10), Leadership (8), World Lore (8), Etiquette (9), Secret Signs (9), Languages (9), Healing (8) Social Scale: 6

Props: You need a trident, some robes and some silver spray paint so that you can look like a statue of Hydana. What do you mean that's a stupid idea? You're the one who asked if you needed props.

Action!

When the heroes enter the temple, they see a short fat man in the blue and green robes of Hydana, surrounded by frantically worried villagers. He is doing his best to calm them.

'My friends, we have done nothing to anger the great Hydana. This is some other form of magic at work and we must all pray together to invoke Hydana's blessing and banish it. We must all honour Hydana by going to the sea and praying to him when we catch our fish and mend our clothes. Go forth and protect yourselves in that way.'

Eventually, the villagers will leave to do something useful and the heroes will be left alone with the priest. He will be very willing to help them when he knows that Grask sent them and he will offer whatever aid he can.

What's been happening in the village?

All kinds of strange goings on, caused by some strange sorcery. I have seen many villagers fall over and blame their neighbours despite them being innocent. Some of the soberest of people seem to have become raging drunks in the day. The seas no longer provide fish to feed us and provide us with an income. Our little community is breaking down.

Is Old Bess causing this?

Bess is such a kindly soul, I can't imagine why she can or will want to inflict such suffering on the people of this village. I never knew of her dabbling in magic

either. She seemed quite happy before she was arrested, actually. Her husband found a ring in a fish's stomach and sold it to Randolph Carter, the jeweller. He probably ripped her off, but she still got enough to see her through the next month. Then she was being accused of witchcraft and she was thrown into the gaol to stop her being lynched. The curse continues, however.

Can anyone else help us?

The fishermen in the tavern will tell you how bad the situation is and may provide you with some helpful rumours, that they wouldn't tell me because I appear too respectable. Captain Grimes of the watch would be able to tell you of any unsavoury characters in the village. He may even let you talk to Bess if you earn his respect.

Do you know of any magic to help us?

Magic? What do I know of magic? I wanted to spread the word of Hydana and thought that magic, even priestly magic was superfluous to life. I guess, I grew up surrounded by paranoid superstitious villagers who seemed quite happy without magic. Now that hostile magic has visited our village, I am powerless to stop it. Once this curse has lifted, I am going to Salaomonis to learn the magic of Hydana.

There is a Sea Sprite causing the curse (the heroes may know this if they spotted the sprite in the market or the docks).

Really? You saw a sea sprite causing havoc in the village? Well then someone has upset it somehow as normally the faerie folk of the sea are content to just play the odd trick on sailors. You could try to placate it or talk to it if you wish. If you go out to sea with the fishermen, I could give you a rhyme that summons sprites. Beware! Sprites have many spells at their disposal and can unleash storms upon their enemies or summon chthonic beasts from the depths to drag boats down into the ocean.

Talis can tell the heroes the rhyme which will summon the Sprite if the heroes go out to sea.

Is there any other help you can give us?

I can patch up some of your wounds and offer the blessing of my god but I do not know the magic of priests.

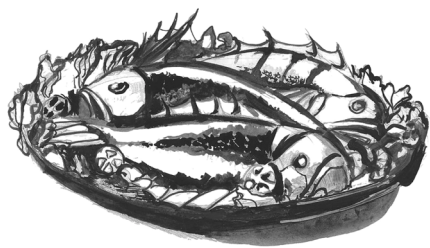
Talis will use his healing skill on the heroes and say a prayer for them (which does nothing). The heroes can also donate money to the temple. If a hero donates 10GP or more, then Talis will give them an amulet of sea shells on a leather cord – it is an amulet of Hydana but it does not have any magical power. However, the villagers will look more favourably on people wearing the amulet.

Problems?

Hopefully the heroes will not attack him or be rude to him. If they do, then have Hydana do something very nasty to them.

Turn to...

The heroes can visit any place that the time of day allows.



SCENE 4: THE GAOL

Location: The gaol in Meraki is a small stone building in a bad state of repair. If a crime does occur in such a small close-knit village, then its perpetrator will become known to the entire population in a matter of hours and it will collectively show its disapproval through scoldings and social exile. Due to this fact, few people commit crimes and so the gaol has become run down through disuse.

Plot Summary: The heroes could be in the gaol to question Bess or because they've done something stupid.

Cast List

Captain Merreck: The watch captain is a skilled warrior and a man of few words. He has actually been trying to find some way to not execute Bess, but he needs some hard evidence that someone else has caused this curse.

WATCH CAPTAIN

SKILL 9 STAMINA 16
LUCK 9

Special Skills: Awareness (11), Sword (12), Leadership (10), World Lore (10), Sea Lore (10), Swim (10), Religion Lore (10), Con (10), Law (10), Secret Signs (10), Trap Knowledge (10), Ride (10), Strength (10), Javelin (10)
Social Scale: 6
Sword, Javelin

Old Bess: Old Bess is Fisherman Tom's wife of many years and has obtained a reputation as a bit of a wise woman in the village. She spends her time telling the village children stories, preparing large meals, repairing sails and clothes and dealing with minor ailments that the villagers suffer from. Although she does know magic (albeit minor magic), she does not show it as most of the spells have no easily detectable effects and if they do, she will cover up the magic by performing an action to make it look like her natural abilities did the magic. For example, she will cast the mend spell on a hole in some clothes while sewing them to make it look like it was her sewing that darned the clothes. However, Bess's proximity to the source of the curse has made her the prime target to be accused of being a witch by the villagers. She is now locked up in the village gaol for her own protection more than anything.

OLD BESS SKILL 6 STAMINA 8
LUCK 12

Special Skills: Sea Lore (8), Minor Magic (10), Healing (9), Folklore (10), World Lore (7), Plant Lore (8)
Social scale: 3
Minor Spells: Burn, Cool, Dry, Enhance, Extinguish, Hear, Heat, Mend, Mistake, Ripen, Sober, Weather improver.

Guards: They have the same stats as the guards from the market. There is 1 guard for every 2 heroes (round down.)

Props: You could wear a policeman's helmet for this scene. If the heroes have been locked up, you could make them speak to you through bars. You don't need real ones; you can make pretend ones with cardboard and foil.

Action!

The gaol is a small stone building in the north of the village. As the heroes approach the building, they will see several wanted posters for Bartrom, offering a 100GP reward for his head.

There are two ways that the heroes can get into Old Bess's cell. The first way is by earning the respect of the watch captain by bringing him the head of Bartrom the Smuggler. He will hand over 100GP and ask the heroes if they found anything that Bartrom was smuggling. Anything that the heroes will declare will be confiscated by the watch with the intention of either returning it to its owners or selling the goods and spending the proceeds on the village so smart heroes will keep quiet if they managed to get Bartrom's treasure. If that is the case then the captain will take the heroes to Old Bess's cell. If the heroes don't have Bartrom's head, then the captain will not want these smelly adventurers wasting his time when he could be dealing with all of the problems.

The other way that the heroes can meet Old Bess is by being arrested and then being thrown into a cell with her. The hero(es) will be able to get useful information from her, but if they are being locked in the cell for longer than overnight, then they will need to escape to apply their knowledge.

The captain: If the heroes have killed Bartrom, then the watch captain will try to be helpful to the heroes and his gut is telling him that old Bess is not responsible for the curse but he has nothing to go on that says otherwise. If the heroes have not killed Bartrom, then he will be brusque and not have enough time to answer the heroes' questions.

Why has Bess been accused of causing the curse?

What we know is that she had a row with her husband the night before the curse happened. The row did not get violent and we only knew about it after the curse started. However, the next day, Tom, her husband started acting strangely as if he had lost his wits. A few hours later, their house was overcome by rats. What it

looks like is that Tom got Bess angry and she lashed out with magic. What doesn't add up for me is that this has never happened before and we could have put it down to a coincidence if it wasn't for the visitors Bess had the next day. Four other fishwives visited the house and drank nothing but water. They all left blind drunk. One fell over and banged her head. It seemed that after the day of the row, bad things happened to anyone who came into contact with Bess. Too many to be a coincidence I'm afraid.

Are you really going to kill her?

We have to. All the evidence points towards Bess being a witch. Too many bad things happened to the people around her and now the whole village is losing out. No one has caught any fish for a week.

Could no one else be capable of this magic?

No one who lives in the village trusts magic enough to learn it or use it, certainly not to this extent. Any stranger to the town who is revealed to be a magic user is mistrusted and I've had to turn some wizard types away for their own safety. You are the only strangers to come to this village for two weeks. The only person in this village who could do this is Talis, the priest of Hydana. Maybe we have displeased the sea god somehow and he is punishing us for something.

Could Bartrom be responsible?

That rogue? Of course not! I once heard a rumour that he was a wizard's apprentice. That maybe true, but this isn't him at all. He'd only do something for profit and this curse would not help him at all.

Old Bess: Old Bess is being well looked after in the gaol as all of the guards have fond memories of her mending their clothes and telling them funny stories. In fact, she is locked in the gaol more for her own protection rather than others.

Why have you been accused of this?

Because people are scared that's why. Something they can't explain happens and they turn on the nearest eccentric old crone. I had a row with my husband the night before the curse fell. He had spent some money that we were saving for our children on some new fancy cloak. He told

me not to worry and that he had some more money as he had found a ring in the stomach of a fish and he had sold it to a merchant earlier. It was that night that he became befuddled. Then came the rats. Hundreds of them scampered through our house, chewing through our possessions. Nothing else happened to us, but I got blamed because it all started with my house.

Do you know any magic?

I'm a simple fishwife. Of course I don't know any magic. (Bess will never willingly admit to using even minor magic as she thinks that the guards may be listening in and any admission to using magic will send her straight to the executioner).

Who or what could be causing the curse?

It could be one of them fae creatures. They like causing mischief and vexing simple folk, but then they don't act in a malicious way normally. Or Hydana may be displeased with us for some reason. I gave up trying to fathom the gods long ago. Our priest Talis may have been given a vision as to whom or what is causing this curse.

Can anyone else help?

My husband has visited me and said that he will do anything to free me. If you show him my wedding ring, he will offer you whatever help that he and his friends can.

Bess will give one of the heroes a plain gold band from around her finger.

The problem is being caused by a sea sprite.

A sea sprite? Oh my! He must be angry. I told Tom not to... Sorry, I think I know the problem. Just before this curse started, my husband found a ring in the stomach of a fish. It had a green gem and an eerie faint glow. I told him to throw it back into the sea, but he sold it and told me not to be so superstitious. I'll wager that the ring belongs to the sprite and it wants it back by any means possible. I don't know who he sold the ring to, but if you find it and give it back to the sprite, then this curse will end. There is an old mariners' rhyme that they say summons sea sprites.

When you get the ring, go to sea and say it. It will summon the sprite. Then give it the ring. Hopefully this curse will go away, and I can be free.

Bess will teach the heroes the rhyme to summon the sprite.

Breaking Out

If the heroes are in the gaol because they have broken the law, then they may want to break out. If they are staying for more than a night then they must break out to complete the quest. Otherwise, they could just spend the night in the cells.

If they are staying longer than a night or they are just impatient to continue their quest, the heroes need to find a way to break out of the gaol. First of all any heroes who are in the gaol as prisoners will have all of their weapons and equipment taken away from them.

There will be two guards and the captain in the gaol if the heroes try to break out. They will not be in the same room as the heroes. The heroes can get the door open with an open spell or a roll against lock picking or strength. The heroes will then have to make a roll against their SKILL or their sneaking skill to get out. Each hero can have one try at opening the cell door. Any hero who fails a sneak roll will have to fight the two guards. They have to be careful to just knock them out and not kill them.

If some of the heroes are still free then they can break the others out. They can get in without any fuss, but they then have to break the heroes out with a lock pick roll, strength roll or open spell. Alternatively, they could engage the guards in combat, knock them out and take the keys. The heroes have to knock out the guards and the captain in order to get their equipment back.

Bess will not escape. She does not want to be a fugitive and has nowhere else to go. There is no one else in the gaol.

Problems?

Captain Merreck will lock up any heroes who try to bribe him for some

reason. If the heroes have been locked up here, their escape is their last chance. If they bungle that (by killing a guard or the captain) then they deserve everything they get. Bess will not want to escape. She does not want to leave her life here behind.

Turn to...

The heroes can go to any location that their time slot allows.

SCENE 5: THE TAVERN

Location: *Ye Old Sea Hag* is an average quality tavern near the market square. It is frequented by fishermen and workers after a long day of hard labour. The heroes will also find Fisherman Tom, Bess's husband here. The heroes can buy any number of

meals here and restore 2 STAMINA points per meal up to the maximum of two meals (see menu below). Drinks do not have any effect on the heroes unless they decide to drink more flagons of ale or glasses of wine or spirits than half of their STAMINA score at which point they will become drunk until the next morning.

Plot Summary: The heroes try to convince the mistrustful villagers to yield up some information.

Cast List

Fisherman Tom:
FISHERMAN
TOM SKILL 6 STAMINA 11
LUCK 7
Special Skills: Sea Lore (10), Fishing (10), Bargain (8), Swim (9),

Social Scale: 3

Fisherman Tom is very worried that his wife has been incarcerated and will help the heroes at all costs as long as he knows that they are working in her best interests. He will help the heroes if they have Bess's wedding ring from the gaol.

The other patrons of the inn are fishermen, artisans, merchants, old people and guards with the same stats as in the market.
Props: Hopefully, you are already providing refreshments for your gaming sessions, but maybe you could give them a fish based theme for this scene.

Action!

The heroes can mingle with the local villagers and ask them about any local rumours. Heroes can try to gather some information. The villagers, however are suspicious of outsiders and aren't very forthcoming with the heroes to start with. They can, however do things to help themselves and things to not help themselves. Each hero can make a test against their etiquette skill or SKILL score once per hero per time slot with the following modifiers (see table on opposite page).

If a hero succeeds, they are told one of the following rumours:

Smugglers in the caves

There are some nearby caves (the fishermen will give directions to them) where we've seen some lights. I bet some smugglers are holing up in them.

Strange lights and no fish at sea

If you go down to the docks at dusk or night, you might see strange lights floating out around the sea and the docks.

Randolph Carter's strange merchandise

Randolph Carter is a merchant who buys and sells jewellery and other strange goods. One of the fisherman says he's been feeling a bit uncomfortable around Randolph's



Action taken by Hero	Modifier
Starting modifier because the villagers are suspicious of strangers	-3
Hero has the world lore skill and succeeds in a world lore test	+1
Hero has the fishing lore skill and succeeds in a fishing lore test	+2
Hero has the sea lore skill and succeeds in a sea lore test	+2
Hero has the con skill and succeeds in a con test	+2
Hero has the leadership skill and succeeds in a leadership test	+2
Hero wearing fisherman's clothes (can be bought from the market)	+1
Hero is wearing an amulet of Hydana (can be obtained from Talis for a donation to the temple)	+1
Hero wearing clothes or jewellery that makes them look like a magic user (other than a priest) e.g. robes, pointy hat, magical focus.	-2
Hero pays 0SP-14SP for drinks	-2
Hero pays 15SP-29SP for drinks	0
Every 3GP heroes pay for drinks (up to 12GP)	+1
Hero's social scale modifier	+hero's social scale -3

stall recently and he's sure that he saw a strange glow from one of his pieces. The fishermen can give the heroes directions to his house.

Fisherman Tom

Fisherman Tom is Bess's wife. The fishermen will point him out. Fisherman Tom is drowning his sorrows in cheap watered ale. If the heroes approach him, he will be extremely unfriendly unless the heroes have Bess's ring, in which case he will help the heroes in any way he can, which extends to transporting the heroes in his fishing boat and telling them the location of Randolph Carter's house.

It's a sea sprite

A drunk fisherman swears that he saw a Sea Sprite at sea. The next day, he decided to say an ancient rhyme that summons Sea Sprites and the same Sea Sprite came up from the sea. It looked angry at him, however, and with a snap of its fingers, pushed him down. The drunk fisherman can teach the heroes the rhyme.

Problems?

If the heroes fail a roll, then the fishermen may tolerate the heroes but they will not be very forthcoming. If the heroes push them, then they may make the fishermen angry. Hopefully, they will have enough sense to not push it further or they will start a fight.

Turn to...

The heroes can go to any place that

their time slot allows. They could also go to Randolph Carter's house (scene 7) or the caves (scene 8) if they have managed to get the locations.

SCENE 6: THE DOCKS

Location: They are the bit of the village that is by the sea.
Plot Summary: The heroes might come to the docks for two reasons. One is to see if there are strange lights at night or in the evening. The other one is to get a boat to sea to investigate the lack of fish or to summon the sea sprite. Otherwise, there is nothing for the heroes here.

Cast List

There are some **fishermen** here plying their trade. Their stats are listed in Scene 2. The **Sea Sprite**. Its stats are also listed in Scene 2. **Fisherman Tom** will also be here if the heroes have befriended him in the tavern. His stats are listed in scene 6.
Props: Maybe some model boats or toy boats.

Action!

If the heroes go down to the docks in the day, then they will see downtrodden fishermen loading their boats and sailing out to sea and back. They all look depressed as the still sea is not yielding up any fish.

Fisherman Tom will be there and if he has agreed to help the heroes, then he will take them out to sea if they ask. Otherwise, the heroes could persuade a fishing captain to take them out to sea with a successful etiquette or SKILL roll subject to the following modifiers

(see table on following page).

If the heroes go down to the docks at dusk or night, they will find that they are deserted. If they stay there for about half an hour, then they will see strange lights under the sea. One of the lights will float up from under the water. If the heroes inspect it, they will see a glowing sea sprite flying above the water and land on the docks.

If the heroes, are hiding, they will need to make hide rolls to make sure that the sprite does not spot them. If they fail or if they do not bother hiding and give chase, then the sprite will cast the fog spell and run off. If that fails, then the sprite will cast the invisibility spell. If they both fail, then the sprite will cast another flight spell and head out to sea.

If the heroes offer the sprite the ring, then it will approach them cautiously, motioning them to throw it at him. If the heroes do so, then the sprite will take it and head for the sea, never to be seen again. The fish will return to the waters and the villagers will no longer be assaulted with mischievous sorcery. If the heroes do this to lure the sprite into a trap, it will use all of its magic to escape and head back to the sea. Killing the sprite will also lift the curse.

Problems?

Hopefully the heroes will be sensible enough to not swim out to sea to chase the sprite. It won't end well.

Action taken by Hero	Modifier
Starting modifier because the villagers are suspicious of strangers	-3
Hero has the world lore skill and succeeds in a world lore test	+1
Hero has the fishing lore skill and succeeds in a fishing lore test	+2
Hero has the sea lore skill and succeeds in a sea lore test	+2
Hero has the con skill and succeeds in a con test	+2
Hero has the leadership skill and succeeds in a leadership test	+2
Hero wearing fisherman's clothes (can be bought from the market)	+1
Hero is wearing an amulet of Hydana (can be obtained from Talis for a donation to the temple)	+2
Hero wearing clothes or jewellery that makes them look like a magic user (other than a priest) e.g. robes, pointy hat, magical focus	-2
Hero offers 0~9GP	-3
Hero offers 10~19GP	-1
Hero offers 20~29GP	0
Hero offers 30~39GP	+1
Hero offers 40GP or more	+2
Hero's social scale modifier	+hero's social scale -3

Turn to...

The heroes can go to any place that their time slot allows. They could also go out to sea (scene 9).

SCENE 7: RANDOLPH CARTER'S HOUSE

Location: Randolph Carter's house is a medium sized, well kept building on the edge of the village.
Plot Summary: The heroes will come here to get the sprite's ring. They can either buy it or steal it.

Cast List

Randolph Carter and the Strong-arms. Their stats are listed in the market place.

Props: A cat. Randolph has a pet cat.

Action!

The house is empty during the day but at night, it will be occupied by Randolph and his strong-arms. If the heroes knock on the door and Randolph is in, then he will be grumpy and not in the mood to sell. If the heroes mention the ring specifically and say that they want it, then he will demand 350 Gold Pieces for it and not go below 300 Gold Pieces.

The heroes could try to break into the house. They could gain access by picking the lock or forcing the door (strength roll). If the house is occupied, then entry to the ground floor will alert the strong-arms and

send them running to the heroes for fight them, while Randolph flees with his merchandise. A hero could also climb to the first floor and force a window (climb roll). If anyone is in, forcing the door will bring the strong-arms running. Anyone in the house needs to make a sneak roll to avoid alerting anyone inside if the house is occupied. If the heroes get to the first floor and search it properly (the heroes need to pass two sneak rolls or alert the inhabitants), then they will find a small box which contains various bits of small jewellery but they will only find the sprite's ring if Randolph is in. Otherwise, it is in the market (the other jeweller is worth 1000GP if Randolph is in but only 100GP if he is not as he has taken most of it to market. However, the heroes better not try to sell any of it in the village as word travels quickly and everyone will know the description of the stolen jewellery. Revealing it to anyone in the village will get them to alert the militia who will chase the heroes out of the village).

Problems?

The heroes need to make sure that they don't kill anyone. Randolph may be a sneaky, greedy con man but he is still part of the community and the villagers will still be angry at his death.

Turn to...

The heroes can go to any place that their time slot allows.

SCENE 8: THE UNDERGROUND CAVES

Location: The caves are a little way out of the village and in a nearby cliff. The heroes can get to them easily enough without climbing but the path is obscured by undergrowth and the heroes will only know if it is there if they have been told by someone in the village tavern.
Plot Summary: The heroes find some smugglers, kill them and hopefully take their treasure and the head of their leader to make a tidy profit.

Cast List

Bartrom the smuggler
Bartrom uses his magic so that only he can find, lock and open his caches. However, he does not want his fellow criminals to know that he is a magic user and so when he casts lock and open, he uses an old useless key to pretend that he just has a special key that can open the chest. His use of the where's home spell makes him appear to have a great memory for the many locations that he has stashed his stolen goods. There is a 100 Gold Piece reward for his head.

BARTROM SKILL 8 STAMINA 12
LUCK 9

Special Skills: Magic (9), Minor Magic (11), Sea Lore (11), Con (11), Secret Signs (9), Hide (10), Sneak (9), Awareness (9), Bargain (9),
Social Scale: 3
Sword (Cutlass), Dagger, Throwing Dagger.
Spells: Lock, Open, Where's Home?
Minor Spells: Attraction, Enhance,

Hear, Inebriate, Instil, Mistake, Repulsion, Secrete, Sober.

Smugglers

There is one scurvy smuggler per hero complete with bandana and cutlass. Just to clarify, they are wearing other clothes as well.

SMUGGLER SKILL 7 STAMINA 10
LUCK 9

Special Skills: Sea Lore (9), Secret Signs (9), Hide (8), Sneak (8), Sword (8)

Social Scale: 0~2

Sword (Cutlass), Dagger, Throwing Dagger.

Props: This is an ample time to get out that pirate costume and practice saying 'Arrrr' and 'Yohoho!'

Action!

The heroes have found their way into the caves where they hear a voice coming from in front of them.

'My friends, well done on our latest mission. The payment for our delivery has been given to us and it is here. I will now share it out.'

If the heroes continue, they will be able to see a group of smugglers standing around in a cave. The heroes are able to spy on them unobserved. They will see one of the smugglers remove a rusty key from his pocket and kneel down to open a small iron box. The smuggler with the key is Bartrom and he is actually casting an open spell on the box which he has locked with a lock spell. Any hero who has seen his wanted poster in the market, the tavern or the gaol will recognise him. He does not want to give away the fact that he can use magic and so he is pretending to be wrestling with the lock while he is casting the spell. After one minute, Bartrom opens the box to reveal a pile of gold which he then starts to distribute to his smugglers.

At any time, the heroes can attempt to ambush the smugglers with a sneak roll against Bartrom's awareness. If all of the heroes succeed, they surprise the smugglers and get a +6 bonus to their attack strength in the first round of combat. Additionally, if they win the first round, they get a +2 bonus to the damage roll and if they lose,

they will not receive any damage. If one of them fails, Bartrom will shout a warning and the combat will start normally. If the heroes attack the smugglers before he completes the spell, then the box will remain with a lock spell on it.

If the heroes attempt to engage the smugglers in conversation, then they will be attacked straight away. At the beginning of combat, one smuggler will not be fighting a hero and they will attempt to use their throwing dagger. They will then attack the hero who seems to be fighting with the most ease (in game terms, the one who wins an attack round with the highest difference in attack strengths between them and their opponent).

These smugglers are the only humans that the heroes can kill and the villagers will not have a problem with that. When the heroes win, they can search the cave. The box contains 300 gold pieces, but if the heroes ambushed the smugglers before Bartrom finished the open spell, then they have to overcome a lock spell. Otherwise, a hero with the strength skill could break open the hinges with a roll at a -2 penalty.

The smugglers are carrying 17 Gold Pieces and 45 Silver Pieces between them in their pockets. Any heroes who have been in the market, the tavern or the gaol will know that Bartrom is wanted and his head will fetch 100 Gold Pieces from the watch.

Problems?

Hopefully, this should be quite a routine combat for the heroes, even if they don't have the element of surprise.

Turn to...

The heroes can go to any place that their time slot allows.

SCENE 9: THE SEA

Location: The sea is very calm and devoid of fish at the moment. Both are the sprite's doing through the use of weather control spells and pried piper minor spells.

Plot Summary: The heroes face the sprite in order to stop its curse once

and for all.

Cast List

The Sea Sprite (stats are in the market scene).

Several **fishermen**. Their stats are given in the market scene.

Possibly **Fisherman Tom** if the heroes are using his boat. His stats are given in the tavern scene.

Giant Octopus

This huge Octopus is summoned by the sprite. Its tentacles will wrap around the boat and attack its crew. All the heroes except one will have to fight two tentacles at a time.

TENTACLES each SKILL 7 STAMINA 6
Club or constriction

Whenever the tentacle wins an attack round, roll a die. On the roll of a 1~4, it whacks the hero for the same damage as a club. On the roll of a 5 or 6. It wraps around part of the hero's body and does 1 STAMINA point of damage. From now on, it will automatically inflict 1 STAMINA point of damage per round even if it loses an attack round until it has been killed. It no longer hits the hero for club damage.

Props: Some rubber tentacles and a sailor hat. And some sprite drink.

Action!

The heroes are at sea in a fishing boat. If they do not know the rhyme to summon the Sprite then nothing happens and they will eventually head back after a frustrating waste of time. If the heroes do not know the rhyme, but throw the ring into the sea, then they will see the Sprite fly out of the water, ring in hand and bow to the heroes in thanks. The curse is lifted and the heroes can return and clear Bess's name.

If the heroes know the rhyme, then speaking it will summon the sprite, who will fly out of the sea and look down on the heroes with contempt. If their next action is not to throw the sprite its ring or offer it, then the sprite will cast the summon animals spell, to summon a large octopus with many tentacles to attack the boat. The tentacles will shoot up from both sides of the boat, forcing the scared

fishermen to huddle in the centre of the boat. There will be enough tentacles for one per hero minus one. One of the heroes has to face the Sea Sprite who will fly out of range of any hand to hand weapons the heroes may have and cast spells such as fog (which does not affect the tentacles), mirror selves (if someone attacks it with ranged weapons), weather control (to create stormy weather to rock the boat and reduce heroes' attack strengths by 1) and summon animals again, if the heroes kill the tentacles.

If the Sprite is short on STAMINA, it will cast the STAMINA spell.

Turn to...

What happens here depends on the heroes' actions. If the heroes return the ring to the sea then the tentacles will withdraw and the sprite will dive under the water never to be seen again. A fisherman then shouts – 'there are fish in the sea!' Sure enough, fish start to leap about in the sea. The curse has been lifted and Bess will be released.

The same effect can also be achieved if the heroes manage to kill the Sea Sprite. Although they have killed something that was not evil but just angry that someone has stolen one of its most prized possessions. However, the villagers will not care about this.

If the heroes flee or abandon ship, then the curse will remain and Bess will be executed. Although most people will realise her innocence when nothing changes for the better, it will be of no comfort to her husband. The Sprite will soon discover who has the ring.

If Randolph Carter still has it then the fish will return a week later when he leaves the village by boat for Port Blacksand. However, his ship will sink. If the heroes have been too greedy to let go of it and they ever take a boat to sea while carrying the ring then they will be beset by storms and sea monsters.

Success level should be based on this scale:

3/3: The heroes save Old Bess,



give the Sea Sprite's ring back and kill the smugglers.

2.5/3: The heroes save Old Bess and give the Sea Sprite's ring back.

2/3: The heroes save Old Bess but kill the sea sprite.

1/3: Old Bess is executed but the heroes did not find the ring.

0/3: Old Bess is executed and the heroes have the ring or the heroes killed an innocent villager and got chased out of the village.

Keeping the Adventure a Challenge

Since the combat abilities from a 1st

edition AFF hero could range from having a SKILL of 3 to having a weapon skill of 16, some of the encounters in the book may be too easy or difficult for some heroes so this table (see below) will give new levels for opponents' skills and weapon skills so that all heroes are challenged. The cast member's SKILL or weapon skill will be calculated relative to the SKILL or weapon skill of the hero they are facing or the SKILL of the hero with the highest SKILL. They also have maximum or minimum values (see table below).

FF

Character	Skill Calculation
Grask	SKILL = highest SKILL amongst heroes +1 (max 12)
Captain Merreck	SKILL = highest SKILL amongst heroes +2 (max 12)
Talis	SKILL = highest SKILL amongst heroes -1 (min 5)
Bartrom	SKILL = highest SKILL amongst heroes +1 (max 9)
Smuggler	SKILL = SKILL of hero they are facing in combat (max 8)
Tentacle	SKILL = SKILL of hero they are facing in combat (max 8)
Sea Sprite	SKILL = highest SKILL amongst heroes +2 (max 12)
Old Bess	SKILL = highest SKILL amongst heroes -1 (min 5)
Randolph Carter	SKILL = highest SKILL amongst heroes (max 9)
Strongarm	SKILL = SKILL of hero they are facing in combat (max 9)
Guard	SKILL = SKILL of hero they are facing in combat (max 9)
Fisherman Tom	SKILL = highest SKILL amongst heroes +1 (max 9)
Fisherman, artisan, merchant, beggar	SKILL = SKILL of hero they are facing -1 (min 5)
Village elder	SKILL = SKILL of hero they are facing -2 (min 4)

CONVERSION RULES FOR AFF2

I have kept out skills that aren't in AFF2, so conversion for AFF2 should be quite easy. The only difference is the characters. Here are the characters according to AFF2 rules:

Grask

GRASK SKILL 8 STAMINA 15
LUCK 11

Special Skills: Fishing (2), Sea Lore (3), Leadership (2), Etiquette (1), Con (1), World Lore (1), Swim (2), Religion Lore (1), Bargain (1), Common (4)
Talents: Silvertongued
Social Scale: 6

Randolph Carter

Languages skill has been removed.

RANDOLPH

CARTER SKILL 6 STAMINA 6
LUCK 9

Special Skills: Bargain (3), Con (3), Sea Lore (2), World Lore (2), Etiquette (2), Common (4), Dwarvish (3), Elvish (4)
Talents: Silvertongued
Social Scale: 4
Dagger

The Sea Sprite

The Sea Sprite's STAMINA has been reduced drastically as it does not need it for magic for these rules and it is more in flavour that fae creatures have a low stamina. It has also lost the STAMINA and LUCK spells and weather improver has been replaced with weather protection.

SEA SPRITE SKILL 10 STAMINA 6
LUCK 12 MAGIC 9
MAGIC POINTS 26

Special Skills: Swim (4), Sea Lore (4), Magic - wizardry (4), Languages (2), Minor Magic (4), Dodge (2), Hide (2), Sneak (2), Common (4), Fae Language (4), Elvish (4)
Talents: Natural Mage, Swashbuckler, Animalfriend
Spells: Befuddle, Flash, Illusion, Light, Thunder, Tongue Twister, Breathe, Fog, Mirror Selves, Grand Illusion, Invisibility, Speak to Animals, Weather Control, Fly, Summon Animals.
Minor Spells: Glimmer, Hold, Inebriate, Instil, Mistake, Noises Off!, Pied Piper, Pucker, Push, Slip, Sour, Weather Protection.
Dagger

Strongarm

STRONGARM SKILL 7 STAMINA 11
LUCK 6

Special Skills: Sword (1), Strength (1), Ride (1), Hunting (1), Flatland Lore (1), World Lore (1), Awareness (1), Common (4)
Talents: Strongarm
Social Scale: 2

Village guard

GUARD SKILL 7 STAMINA 10
LUCK 9

Special Skills: Sea Lore (2), Swim (2), Sword (1), Javelin (1), Law (1), Ride (1), Common (4)
Talents: Strongarm
Social Scale: 2
Sword, Javelin

Artisan

Added the evaluate skill as bargain no longer covers valuing items.

ARTISAN SKILL 6 STAMINA 8
LUCK 7

Special Skills: Sea Lore (2), Swim (2), (Craft) Lore (3), Evaluate (2), Common (4)
Talents: Silvertongued
Social Scale: 1~2

Merchant,

Added the evaluate skill as bargain no longer covers valuing items.

MERCHANT SKILL 6 STAMINA 7
LUCK 8

Special Skills: Sea Lore (1), Bargain (2), Con (2), Evaluate (2), Common (4)
Talents: Silvertongued
Social Scale: 2~4

Fisherman

FISHERMAN SKILL 6 STAMINA 10
LUCK 8

Special Skills: Sea Lore (2), Swim (2), Fishing (2), Common (4)
Talents: Robust
Social Scale: 1~2

Beggar

BEGGAR SKILL 6 STAMINA 8
LUCK 9

Special Skills: Disguise (2), Con (2), Sea Lore (1), Swim (1), Common (4)
Talents: Robust
Social Scale: 0

Old man/woman

OLD MAN/
WOMAN SKILL 5 STAMINA 5
LUCK 9

Special Skills: Sea Lore (3), Swim (3), Fishing (3) OR (Craft) Lore (3), Con (2), Common (4)
Talents: Robust, Lucky
Social Scale: 1

Talis

Languages skill removed.

TALIS SKILL 6 STAMINA 9
LUCK 12

Special Skills: Sea Lore (1), Swim (1), Religion Lore (4), Leadership (2), World Lore (2), Etiquette (3), Secret Signs (3), Healing (2), Common (4), Ancient Allansian (3), Elvish (3)
Talents: Learned
Social Scale: 6

Captain Merreck

WATCH

CAPTAIN SKILL 9 STAMINA 16
LUCK 9

Special Skills: Awareness (2), Sword (3), Leadership (1), World Lore (1), Sea Lore (1), Swim (1), Religion Lore (1), Con (1), Law (1), Secret Signs (1), Trap Knowledge (1), Ride (1), Strength (1), Javelin (1), Common (4)
Talents: Strongarm
Social Scale: 6
Sword, Javelin

Old Bess

Weather improver has now been replaced with weather protection.

OLD BESS SKILL 6 STAMINA 8
LUCK 12 MAGIC 2
MAGIC POINTS 4

Special Skills: Sea Lore (2), Minor Magic (4), Healing (3), Folklore (4), World Lore (1), Plant Lore (2), Common (4)
Talents: Natural physician
Social Scale: 3
Minor Spells: Burn, Cool, Dry, Enhance, Extinguish, Hear, Heat, Mend, Mistake, Ripen, Sober, Weather Protection.

Bartram

BARTROM SKILL 8 STAMINA 12
LUCK 9 MAGIC 2
MAGIC POINTS 6

Special Skills: Magic - wizardry (1), Minor Magic (3), Sea Lore (3), Con (3), Secret Signs (1), Hide (2), Sneak (1), Awareness (1), Bargain (1), Common (4)
Talents: Light sleeper
Social Scale: 3
Sword (Cutlass), Dagger, Throwing Dagger
Spells: Lock, Open, Where's Home?
Minor Spells: Attraction, Enhance, Hear, Inebriate, Instil, Mistake, Repulsion, Secrete, Sober.

Smuggler

SMUGGLER SKILL 7 STAMINA 10
LUCK 9

Special Skills: Sea Lore (2), Secret Signs (2), Hide (1), Sneak (1), Sword (1), Common (4)
Talent: Light sleeper
Social Scale: 0~2
Sword (Cutlass), Dagger, Throwing Dagger

Tentacles

TENTACLES each SKILL 7 STAMINA 6
Club or constriction

Fisherman Tom

FISHERMAN
TOM SKILL 6 STAMINA 11
LUCK 7

Special Skills: Sea Lore (4), Fishing (4), Bargain (2), Swim (3), Common (4)
Talents: Robust
Social Scale: 3

SPOILERS FOR ALLANSIA!

SPOILERS FOR ALLANSIA!

SPOILERS FOR ALLANSIA!

A DARKNESS OVER KAAD

Fresh from their victory against the BRASS GOLEM in Port Blacksand the Heroes of Allansia (the warrior Ravager, fighters Marcellos & Tetra, Dwarven Cleric Silverarm, and wizard Quarterstaff) did as the wise Nicodemus instructed and warned King Salamon of SARGON'S plans. The King awarded them some fine horses for the adventure ahead and then it was off to Darkwood Forest to find the powerful wizard Yaztromo. In the distance, the abandoned tower of Xortan Throg brought back memories of their rescue of Princess Sarissa and their first encounter with Xortan. Once in the Forest, they were escorted by Wood Elves to Yaztromo's tower. Yaztromo was expecting the Heroes and explained that Sargon was creating an army of Elimites (people that worshipped the ancient evil God called Elim) – and was planning to begin his conquest of Allansia by marching on the seemingly insignificant city of Kaad. Yaztromo had also scryed into the future and said that a prisoner of the Elimite Monastery in the Icefinger Mountains needed to be rescued because that was the 'key to victory' against the Elimites. The Heroes' journey north across the Pagan Plains would be a long one. So Yaztromo gave them a map, a large batch of special herbal sweet cakes, and a special Seal to identify the importance of their assignment, before setting them on their way.

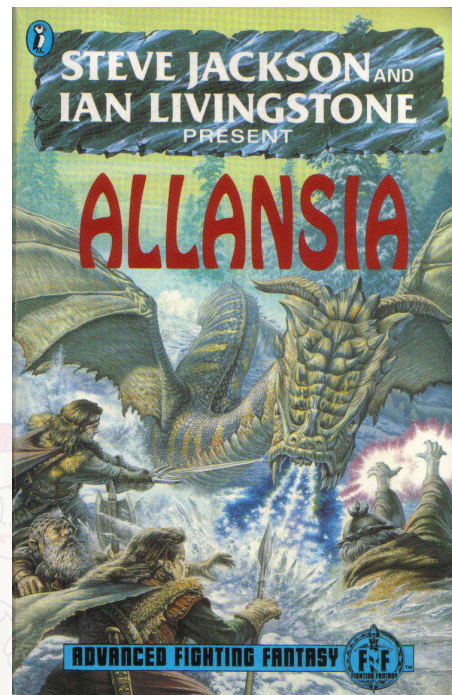
After six days of exhaustive travel across the Pagan Plains, the Heroes arrived at an outpost at the base of the Icefinger Mountains. There they befriended a merchant calling himself Big Jim and traded their fine horses for furs and mountain and snow gear. After another arduous trek, this time up into the cold mountains, the adventurers found the Elimite Monastery, identified by its black flags. Ravager and Silverarm were the first to enter. Once the whole party was in, a MANTICORE pounced. The poisonous barb of its sting found its

mark on Quarterstaff, disabling him. Tetra dragged her wizardly friend to safety as Ravager and Marcellos went about hacking and slashing against the hungry MANTICORE. Silverarm chimed in with another invaluable Befuddle spell, and then all was silent once again.

Ravager was at his quick thinking best, severing the Manticore's barb and siphoning its poison for later use. With Quarterstaff healed, they entered the Monastery. It was deserted, except for one lowly GOBLIN chained in the dungeon. It took a while for it to sink in, but was this creature the one whom Yaztromo foresaw as the Key to a future battle against the Elimites. The Goblin's name was GIBLET, and after some rough house tactics by Ravager, they garnered some vital information. Giblet said Sargon had hundreds of soldiers ready to march on Kaad. Furthermore, Giblet pronounced himself as the 'best goblin scout this side of the Catfish River' and told of a short cut that could head off the advancing Elim Army. Giblet was happy to assist the Heroes, especially considering it meant the slaughter of the Orc armies that had joined SARGON.

Giblet also mentioned that he belonged to a two hundred strong Goblin Army that was based in the Tanglewood forest – led by the GOBLIN KING known as Bonebreaker. This force would be an invaluable ally against the Elimite army. After some further discussion with Giblet and amongst themselves, the party agreed to follow Giblet. First however, Ravager explained to Giblet that Quarterstaff had cast a powerful Curse on the scraggy goblin. It meant that if Giblet threatened any of the adventurers, or strayed more than five hundred feet away, the goblin would DIE instantly. Giblet gulped and the journey began.

With the help of their new guide, the Party successfully scaled the treacherous glaciers of the Icefinger



Mountains. On their descent through the frozen valleys, they came upon a WYRM'S lair. The WYRM burst from its cavern in an icy explosion which catapulted the adventurers onto the snow covered terrain. Marcellos and Giblet ran for cover as Tetra felt the full force of the WYRM's deadly breathe. Silverarm cast Befuddle on the massive creature while Rav and Quarterstaff attacked from the rear. Quarterstaff then threw a Fireball to end the WYRM's attack, as Ravager cleaned up its lair of treasure! After staying the night in the WYRM's shelter, away from the biting cold and snow, the morning dawn brought the next leg of the adventure.

Giblet led his newfound friends through the salty swamp marshes at the mouth of the River Kok. Avoiding the bogs and other pitfalls, they were suddenly ambushed by grotesque MARSH WRAITHS. The Wraiths were in their muddy home ground territory and converged on the entire party who were impeded in thick knee high ooze. Rav summed it up: "We're all gonna die." Quarterstaff cast a Shield spell to save himself as Giblet clung to Tetra, making it even more difficult for the female warrior to raise her muddy sword. But when it looked like all the heroes would

El Ravell

Art: © Nathan Stones, 2011.

Ever sat and stared at your copies of the original *Fighting Fantasy* RPG books or the later *AFF* editions? Ever wondered what it might be like to actually get a group of friends together to play such adventures? **ADRIAN YOUNG** presents an actual account of just such a *Fighting Fantasy* RPG campaign, featuring real Player Characters and outcomes from an adventure played over three four-hour sessions.

be smothered to death, Silverarm tapped into the darkest recesses of the MARSH WRAITH's animated minds with a Fear spell, and in an instant, the mass of Wraiths withdrew. Hooray for the Dwarf!

As they trudged through what was now tall reed swampland, they were met by an army of SWAMP MEN, led by a fierce looking warrior called ELGON. "Perhaps you've heard of me" began Marcellos. The motley crew of heroes explained their mission and were escorted to Elgon's village of E'kaad. There they were cleaned up and fed (and treated with great curiosity by the local kids) and then presented before the swamp people's CHIEF TELAD and their high priest ZUNE. After the adventurers survived a simple ritual called the Test of the Staff (Silverarm made the large Gem at the head of the Staff mysteriously glow when she

touched it), CHIEF TELAD agreed to support them in their battle against SARGON. Sargon was a worshipper of Elim, an evil God who was the vile Dark brother of the swamp people's God of Light - Ashra. Chief Telad assigned Elgon to the party and committed his one hundred and fifty strong Swamp Army to meeting the Heroes at the city of Kaad.

The next day the party arrived at Gible's homeland - the Tanglewood Forest. Travelling through the thick undergrowth, an overwhelmed Elgon (who had never stepped outside his swamp surrounds) became caught in STRANGLE WEED. Unable to escape, and within minutes of being constricted to death, Ravager and Tetra launched to his defense, in spite of Gible's cries to leave him to die! But the warrior tag team underestimated the volume and strength of the STRANGLE WEED

and was soon trapped as well! As the three hapless adventurers lay strung up at the mercy of the thick animated weed, Marcellos entered. The quick thinking Fighter created torch sticks with the forest bracken and began burning the killer shrubs. With Tetra free, she summoned the ICON of GOOD and it tore Elgon from the WEED's clutches, soon followed by Ravager - who had a brief thought to pursue the retracting WEED vines, as they squealed back into their dark hiding places.

E'Lantro

After paying a small fee to a TROLL called Stomp to allow them to cross an algae choked stream, the heroes came upon the home of the Tanglewood Goblin Tribe. Gible explained that in order to enlist the Goblin Army's support, one of the Heroes needed to challenge the Goblin King - Grolik "Bonebreaker" Fatnose - to a ritualistic battle to





city – High Priest Vatchik and his acolytes. The Heroes then planned the defense of Kaad. A communication system of flags was devised as the afternoon sun climbed to its highest. Tetra used her eagle-eyesight to warn of the Orc army that advanced from the north onto Kaad. When the 250-strong 1st regiment of the Orc Army, known as the Fingers of Doom, had moved between the forests outside the Kaad walls, Ravager flagged the attack. Goblin King Marcellos sent his 50-strong Wolf riding goblin cavalry into a furious assault, while Tetra ordered the 150-strong Swamp Army (under a Bravery spell from Zune) to charge into battle.

the death. Under Goblin law, the victor would be King! It was an offer Sir Marcellos couldn't pass. In an insult and goblin ale induced frenzy, Marcellos cut Bonebreaker to pieces (and Rav made a handy sum betting on the side) and soon it was to be KING MARCELLOS of the 150-strong Goblin army. Tetra wooed the Goblin Elders while Rav established himself as Supreme Captain of the Goblin Captains. The day ended with Elgon, Giblet and Marcellos partying late into the night (and Marcellos went to sleep with thoughts of having to impregnate one of the goblin females within 3mths – which was the official duty of a new Goblin ruler. HAIL the KING, BABY!

In the early hours of another Allansian summer morning, with their time in the Tanglewood Forest now but a memory, the travelling adventurers arrived at their final destination, Kaad. And, as Giblet had promised, they arrived ahead of SARGON and the Elimite Army. After a short time in the Kaad gaol for failing to part with their weapons, the Heroes – assisted by Tetra's Icon of Good – uncovered an Elimite spy. After interrogating him, they discovered that the Elimite Army would arrive tomorrow afternoon. The Heroes revealed YAZTROMO's Seal, and explained the evil Elimite plans at the Kaad Council meeting – where they met

the fishmonger Mayor MORGENT, historian Father DURRANT (who successfully persuaded the Heroes to be merciful and lift the curse from Giblet) and retired Salamonian knight General LANNAMAR., Decisions were quickly made that would shape the forthcoming arena of War! King Marcellos would command the Goblin army arriving at dawn, two-hundred strong after being bolstered by Goblin Wolf riders. General Lannamar would command the Kaad Guard of 150 soldiers, archers and cavalry. Tetra would command Elgon's spear wielding swamp warriors, 150 in number who were to be led into Kaad at sunrise by the iconic figures of high priest ZUNE and Swamp Chief TELAD. And Ravager, as if his deepest dream had been realized, would assume the position of SUPREME COMMANDER of the 500 strong KAAD Militia.

The Board was set. The pieces were moving. The Battle for Kaad had begun.

Ravager addressed the Citizens of Kaad with a rousing speech that painted a picture of the landscape of war ahead and the great battle that needed to be fought. Then the Heroes used all the magical resources at their disposal (Icon of Good, Sword of Timakron, Bottle of Entrapment) to round up the Elimite presence in the

The Orc Fingers of Doom had been ambushed in a pincer movement and were being slaughtered. Their command unit soon fell to the combined forces of the Goblin & Swamp warriors. Sargon surveyed the ambush from afar, surrounded by his armoured bodyguard unit, and was quietly impressed at the forces that had converged to defend Kaad. The evil High Priest had thought he would face very little, if any, resistance. But his admiration quickly turned to rage and he barked orders at his 150-strong 2nd Orc regiment, known as the Mountain Daredevils, to assist their brethren. But King Marcellos was prepared, and sent his 150-strong Goblin foot soldiers into the battle. Together with Tetra and her hero-inspired swamp unit, they were more than a match for the combined Orc army, and began carving their way toward Sargon.

For Rav – who surveyed the war from the battlements of Kaad – the war was going to plan. Though there were heavy losses amongst the brave goblins and swamp men, the Orcs had been obliterated. Giblet was particularly gleeful at the volume of Orc blood that poured into the adjoining lake, turning it red. Rav took advantage of his Army's momentum and released Lannamar's 50-strong Cavalry Unit from inside the Kaad gates, and towards Sargon. But SARGON was

a powerful spell caster – a servant of the primeval God Elim – and he commanded a fearsome range of Spells. First, a shower of arrows befell the advancing Kaad cavalry, causing many riders to fall! Then Sargon cast a Strength spell upon his 150-Elimate soldiers, empowering them to inflict more damaging attacks. The Elimate warriors met Lannamar's Noble cavalry head on – and disposed of them in ominous retribution. SARGON then sent his 2nd and 3rd armoured human Elimate units into the mix, whilst simultaneously casting Weakening spells on the forces of good. The tide of battle began to turn, as heavy casualties were inflicted on the tiring and dwindling goblin and swamp numbers.

The Tangleweed goblins, valiant to the end, had now met the same fate as their Orc oppressors – and been slaughtered. Similarly, Tetra's Swamp unit had begun to fall like flies, and she withdrew them back into the forest. High Priest Zune cast Healing spells as Chief Telad looked on despondently. King Marcellos retreated into Kaad and ordered the huge gates closed and secured, as the armored Elimate horde advanced on the City. Supreme Commander Rav called up all his remaining People's Units and City Guard to the wall embankments. Silverarm weaved some Befuddlement spells upon the Elimites as Rav ordered his Bowmen to unleash their arrows. Yet Sargon's army was not daunted and pressed upon the Main Gates. SARGON walked amongst them, still guarded by his elite troops, and began casting another devastating spell. In an instant – in a show of pure evil and omnipotent power – SARGON launched a Fear spell against the Kaad defenses. Rav's units at the Wall turned to flee in terror as the Elimate Army burst through the Main Gate and poured into Kaad, hell bent on death and destruction. The dour Dwarven priestess Silverarm desperately reversed the effects from one of the City Guard units, allowing them to join Rav in the city's last stand! Rav grit his teeth, and though hopelessly outnumbered, engaged the marauding Elimites.

SARGON remained outside the walls of Kaad as his Army routed

the town. He wanted to personally dispose of the Heroes but Tetra's swamp unit wasn't finished yet. Having been healed by Zune, they ambushed Sargon from behind, wiping out his bodyguard unit, and leaving the Sorcerer to stand alone. While surprised at the attack, SARGON could not be harmed by normal weapons – and the spear, arrow and sword attacks merely deflecting off him or passed through his flesh, without injury. The swamp unit withdrew in horror, certain that SARGON was an indestructible demon! Even Tetra's Icon of Good was frozen to the spot by a powerful Sargon Restrain spell! Sargon laughed maniacally as Marcellos, King of the slaughtered Goblin Army, emerged from the chaos. SARGON quipped "Show me what you've got, Goblin King." Marcellos blinded Sargon with his Cobra Tattoo and then let Timakron carve its bloody name in Sargon's chest. Sargon gazed down at his wound, before smacking him away like a bug and preparing a massive counter attack that would send Marcellos into another plane.

Silverarm took advantage of Sargon's distracted state and hit him with a powerful Mind energy bolt. Sargon's veins and nerve endings began to swell as he gripped his head in an attempt to prevent his eye's exploding from their sockets. But Sargon was low on Mana, and exhausted from the huge battle spell-casting during the war. Marcellos wasted no time and attacked again, this time landing Called Shots with his Sword of Timkaron, hacking off Sargon's arms, legs and head! Ravager snatched Sargon's fabled Elimate Spell Book (later handing it to the Wizard Joe Quarterstaff) as the Necromancer fell in pieces to the bloodied ground. ZUNE emerged at the scene with the Staff of Ashra. "This one cannot be killed in the ways of mortals", ZUNE pronounced, unsheathing the Gem atop the staff, "we can only hope to trap the spirit so that it may never walk free again." With that, the Gem began to glow and a ghostly white essence was sucked from Sargon's dismembered body, as the head gargled one last bloodied laugh. The sheath was then reapplied, and bound tightly. "It is done", concluded ZUNE. The Heroes would later learn that it

was the Staff of Ashra that Sargon indeed intended to destroy in his raid on Kaad.

Inside the Kaad city walls, news spread quickly of Sargon's demise. The Fear spell that terrified Rav's infantry had dissipated, and soon the 150-strong Kaad reinforcements had swung the battle back in their favor. The remaining pockets of Elimate soldiers tried to surrender but Rav would take no prisoners. And the Battle of Kaad ended in a bloody massacre! Sargon's dark plans for the rest of Allansia had been averted. As the inhabitants of Kaad reemerged from their safe houses across the blood tainted Lake, there were tremendous cheers for the victorious Heroes. In the aftermath, plans for a brighter future were laid. From the gold, equipment and weapons scavenged from the vanquished Elimites, the City of Kaad would rebuild and General Lannamar would ensure Kaad restored itself to its former glory. The Temple of Ashra would be rebuilt, and shrines erected in honor of the glorious Heroes. Mayor Morgent handed the Freedom Key to the City to Silverarm, and Father Durrant declared that a special Shrine would be erected to Throff, Dwarven Goddess, in honor and respect of the spell casting Silverarm (and to say thanks for her donation of her entire share of the spoils to the People of Kaad). And the Heroes glorious victory forever retold in tale and song.

Goblin King Marcellos transferred his Kingship to GIBLET, so that he may begin the repopulation exercise with his betrothed Goblin queen. The Tanglewood goblins had all been decimated, and as one of the last remaining healthy males, it would be up to GibleT to restore their numbers. Life's tough! For Elgon, Chief Telad and Zune, they would return to the E'kaad swamp village, and take upon the role as keepers and guardians of the fabled Staff of Ashra! And so it was that on this 18th Day of Watching, in the Year 276AC, that four legendary Heroes strode off into the sunset, secure in the knowledge that a great deed had been done, and that somewhere, someplace, another great adventure lay waiting.

CHAPTER THREE

The contingent of would-be rescuers descended from the plateau they had viewed the island and made their way into the overgrown jungle wilderness that confronted them. Thick trunked trees and dense foliage barred their way into the sea of greenery that stretched out far ahead of them. Swords were used to hack at the thicket, but it was proving hard work.

'This is madness,' muttered Noakes, 'utter madness. We'll take a lifetime to cut through this jungle!'

'Perhaps,' answered Orchid. 'I'll wager that girl's life is running out as we trek through here.'

Raven turned his head from the branch he was about to chop to answer his comrade's complaints. 'I would say this Sea Witch has an established means of getting about this island. Either we'll come across a navigable river system or else my gold's on some form of magical transport.'

'Flying carpets?' suggested Avid.

'Maybe,' nodded Raven. 'There was a Sorcerer in Arantis who had a squadron of carpets under his command and who raided villages for several months until an adventurer was brave enough to pitch him off one of his carpets whilst in flight.'

'I sold it on the streets of Kaynlesh-Ma along with most of the haul I took from the citadel.'

'Shame, we could have done with a flying carpet right about now.' Hacksaw, who was slightly ahead of the others, suddenly raised his left hand clenched in a fist. The party of rescuers stopped in their tracks. Orchid moved slowly up to her Black Elf companion and gently lent her head down so he could whisper softly in her ear in Elvish.

'We're being watched,' he said matter-of-factly.

'By who?'

'Humanoids, but I can't be more certain than that. This is their domain and they are masters at blending in to it.'

'Numbers?'

'We are outnumbered.'

'Choices?'

'We move on. When they are ready, they will make their move.' Orchid turned to the others and motioned to them to continue on their way as Hacksaw carried on chopping through the undergrowth.

'What did he say?' asked Avid.

the wood by a spear, was displayed a hideous sculpture; a wheeled shape made up of a mixture of human skulls and shrunk human heads. There was something decided unholy about the place and it filled the minds of the humans present with dread

'This doesn't look good,' said Avid.

'Those are shrunk heads,' commented Noakes. 'I'm thinking Headhunters inhabit this wretched island.'

'It's certainly remote enough from civilization,' agreed Raven. 'I wonder if they belong here or did the Sea Witch bring them to this island realm to deter unwelcome guests such as ourselves?'

'Either way,' cut in Orchid, 'such tribes are primitive and violent. If this is their shrine we should quickly leave and . . .'

'Too late,' announced Hacksaw. From all sides of the glade loin-cloth clad Headhunter warriors stepped out, some held spears whilst others leveled primitive short bows at the group; all of them were daubed in dark red war-paint, which was possibly blood rather than some kind of natural substance. From close to the tree stump emerged a taller warrior who had an ornate bird-feathered headdress on and carried a two-headed axe in both hands. From his looks and demeanor he was

AELOUS RAVEN AND THE

by IAN BROCKLEHURST

Illustrated by Angela Salamaliki © 2011

'You?' asked Conar.

'No,' Raven shook his head and returned to the branch barring his way. 'I explored the Sorcerer's citadel a couple of years after he died. I would have been trapped in there for good if it wasn't for the fact I was able to use of the carpets to fly out on.'

'What happened to the carpet?' continued Conar.

'He senses danger,' answered Orchid, not wishing to alarm the less experienced combatants. 'Be alert and ready for anything.' Her eyes met Raven's and she knew he understood that the danger was more imminent and his grip tightened on his sword handle.

The group suddenly came into a small glade in the center of which stood the base trunk of a felled tree. On top of the gnarled stump, skewered into

clearly the Chieftain. Next to him emerged a wizened old woman who was naked except for a pelt cloak that clung to her loose shoulders. She carried a staff topped with a human skull whose eye sockets had been filled with precious stones that dazzled slightly in the sunlight. She was the tribal Priestess. The Priestess pointed a crooked finger straight at Orchid and started chirping in the unfamiliar language of the tribe.

Orchid's response was to raise her scimitar, but Hacksaw muttered



panicked and made a run back the way the rescuers had just travelled.

'Avid,' snapped Raven. 'Don't be a fool.' He reached out to grab the fleeing sailor but the young man shrugged off his grasp and disappeared into the thicket past two Headhunters who were unsure as what to do.

The Chieftain shouted something and immediately the two Headhunters who had been closest to Avid's escape route tore off in pursuit of the sailor. Six other Headhunters followed their kinsmen screaming at their top of their voices thrilled by the chance of a hunt.

Noakes watched the hunting party rush through the thicket after his fellow crewman, 'We can't let them...'

'It's too late for Avid,' cut in Raven, 'Far too late.' He grimaced at the two remaining sailors. 'Things don't look good for us right now, but Orchid's right. An opportunity to escape will present itself. I've been in this kind of situation many times before and I've always escaped with my head still on my shoulders. Trust me. We'll get out of this one way or another.'

As he finished speaking the

WRATH OF THE SEA-WITCH

something in Elvish and she turned to look her companion square in the eyes. He repeated the phrase.

'We must surrender,' announced Orchid to the other men.

'No way,' shouted Avid, 'they're going to chop us up and serve us at a village feast.'

'We must surrender,' repeated Orchid, 'for at the moment they have the advantages of numbers.'

'I agree,' said Raven, quickly eying up the opposition. 'The odds are against

us right now.'

As Raven spoke, the Chieftain barked some orders in the same language as the Priestess and immediately the Headhunters advanced forward. Orchid threw her scimitar down and raised her hands above her head. Her eyes met the Chieftain's and she recognized the look he had; lust. She had seen that look in several men over the years. None of them were still in one piece.

Raven threw down his short sword and dagger and Conar and Noakes followed suit. Avid, however

remaining Headhunters advanced towards the party of five, their weapons ready to strike at any sign of resistance.

Half an hour later the Headhunters were leading the rescuers along a jungle path next to a swamp on the procession's left-hand side. Each adventurer had their hands tied behind their back with a piece of green vine. Orchid was the foremost captive and she trudged along after four Headhunters who were leading

the column; next to her on her right shadowed the Chieftain who was staring intently at her. Behind Orchid were Noakes, then Hacksaw and Conar with the last captive being Raven. Each prisoner was flanked by a Headhunter to their right and by Hacksaw's Headhunter escort walked the Priestess who was muttering incantations of some kind. Once the prisoners had been tied up the majority of Headhunters who had ambushed the arty in the sanctuary glade had dispersed back into the jungle. Beside Raven and escort followed a young male Headhunter who carried a stretched hide-sack containing the party's weapons.

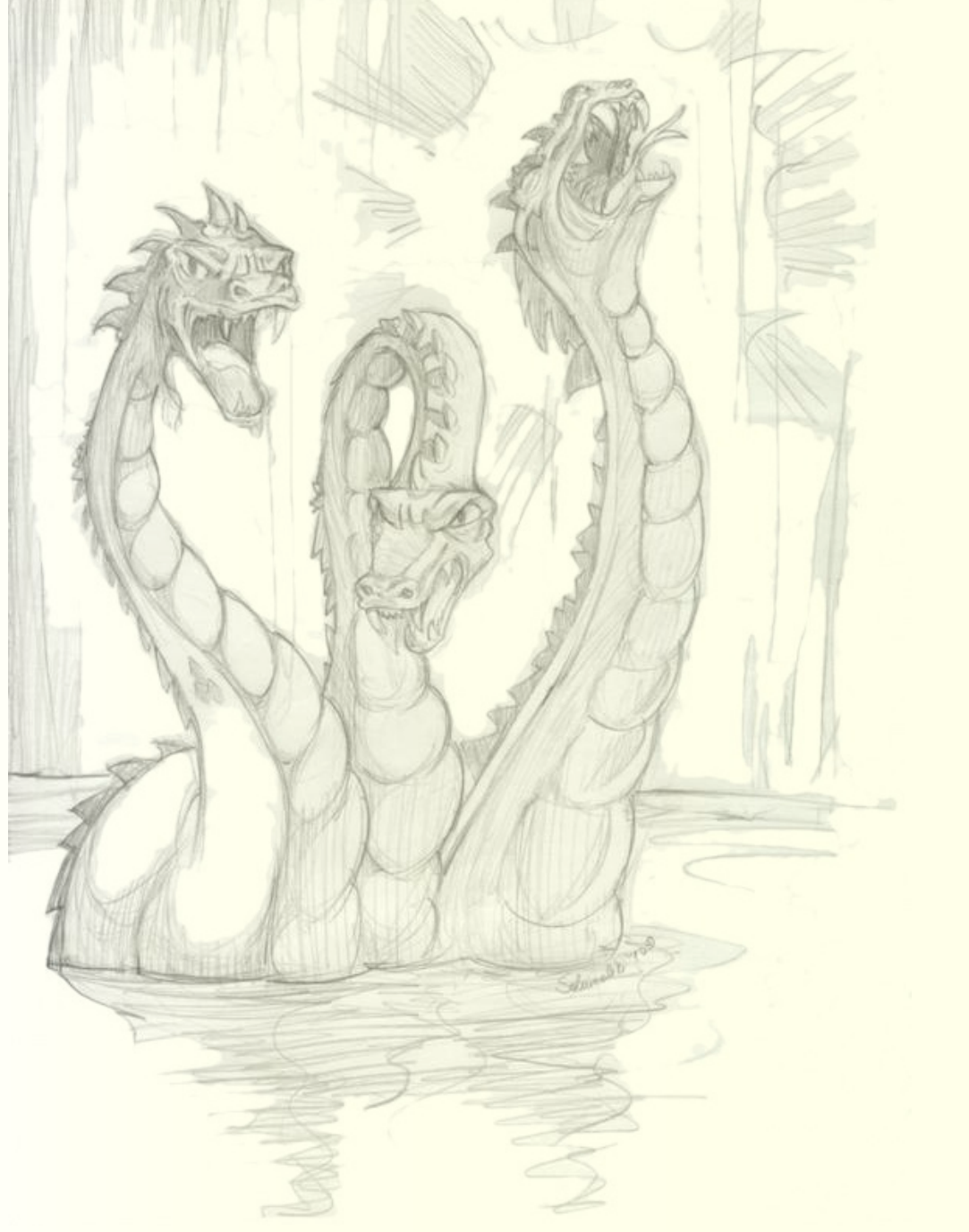
Raven had been bound before and with a variety of materials and as they marched along the swamp's embankment he carefully started to loosen the bonds around his wrists through series of slight twists. It was as he glanced towards the swamp and that a slight movement in the murky water caught his eye. There was something in the swamp. Something big and this something was swimming alongside the column of people. Raven surmised almost instantly that it must be a predator of some kind and the entire group was the prey.

A plan began to coalesce in Raven's mind, but for it to work he was going to need a distraction of some kind. A distraction that would let him put his escape plan into action unnoticed. Suddenly, the thicket close to the Priestess erupted and a Headhunter emerged with his barbed spear in one hand and the still dripping bloody severed head of Avid in the other.

Conar gave a cry of surprise.

The procession stopped and the Chieftain walked over to his warrior and gave him a congratulatory slap on the back.

It was at that point that Raven made his move. His bonds slipped from his wrists and quite effortlessly he grabbed his Headhunter escort and spun the startled man into the swamp. The Headhunter splashed into the opaque water and collapsed



on to his knees. The soup like liquid mass was up to his midriff within seconds.

The Headhunter's unplanned dive into the swamp disturbed the shape that been swimming alongside the embankment just as Raven had hoped it would. A three-headed hydra reared out of the swamp and its third head flicked backwards slightly in order to bellow a hungry cry of delight.

The first head shot forward and decapitated the Headhunter knelt in the swamp. As the headless body slumped backwards into the mire a hot jet of blood squirted out of the neck's stump. The blood splattered the young Headhunter on the embankment who was carrying the stretched hide-sack. As the youngster

was momentarily stunned Raven took this as a cue to uppercut the youth with a well placed punch sending the lad sprawling into the thicket and the hide-sack falling to the ground.

At the same moment Raven was punching the youth, Orchid turned to the Headhunter who was by Noakes' side and head butted him violently. The Headhunter dropped like a stone. As he fell, Orchid spun around in time to kick an approaching warrior square in the groin. As the Headhunter doubled over in agony Orchid's foot connected with the side of his head sending the incapacitated assailant into the swamp with a mighty splash.

The hydra reacted to this commotion in the swamp by snapping the head off the warrior and then rushing at

the embankment. The Headhunter by Hacksaw took flight allowing the Black Elf to defy belief by doing a forward roll that somehow allowed him to get his hands over his legs so that his bound hands were against his stomach. With inhuman speed and agility he got to his feet and clutched hold of the Priestess' left arm.

The old woman squawked in fear and started to feebly strike at Hacksaw with her staff.

Hacksaw saw the middle hydra head lunging at him and deftly positioned the Priestess in the path of the gaping maw. The head took hold of the Priestess' right shoulder and pulled her up into the air. Hacksaw released her right arm as she was carried aloft. Her staff slipped from her weakened grasp and fell into the swamp without a sound. The hydra's other heads hungrily tore chunks out of the wizened body of the screaming woman, but being that she was old and mere skin and bone the Priestess did not satisfy the beast's taste buds and her mauled body was catapulted further into the swamp. As the dying Priestess sank into the boggy mire something took a hold of her leg. Her flesh may not have been enough to please the hydra, but other denizens of the swamp would not be so fussy eaters.

The Chieftain was shocked by the scenes of chaos unfolding before him and as the Headhunter he had just congratulated turn tailed and ran back into the jungle thicket he watched his Priestess fall victim to the hydra. Just as her body was tossed aside, out of the corner of his eye he saw Raven pull out Orchid's scimitar from the hide-sack.

Raven swung the scimitar at Conar's escort who jumped clear of the blade and dived into the thicket. With a quick slice of the blade Raven freed Conar just as the Chieftain attacked swinging his two-headed axe in an arc that nearly cleaved Raven in two.

As the heavy weapon bit into the ground, Raven countered with the scimitar expecting to decapitate the Chieftain. However, the Headhunter Chieftain had planned ahead and was already ducking as the blade swept

through the air. He elbowed Raven in the gut as the adventurer backed away winded, the Chieftain pulled his Axe up again and prepared to deliver a killer blow. He looked to Raven who had dropped to the floor, but as the Chieftain focused on his foe's eyes he realized he did not see fear in his eyes. He saw victory.

The three heads of the hydra plucked up the Chieftain with ease and savagely ripped his body apart showering Raven in gore. On seeing the death of their leader the remaining Headhunters ran off through the thicket.

Conar quickly cut the bonds on Hacksaw and Noakes before freeing Orchid with a fish-gutting knife. Raven handed the Amazon her scimitar back as Hacksaw lead the group away from the swamp and into the jungle thicket. The hydra, satiated by the Chieftain's body, slumped into the swamp in a post-dinner stupor. As silence returned to the swamp a thick tentacle slithered out of the mire and wrapped itself around the legs of the unconscious Headhunter on the embankment. Within seconds the Headhunter was sharply dragged into the swamp and his body was instantly swallowed by the viscous mire.

The rescue party reached a small glade and Hacksaw signaled for them to stop running. Noakes and Conar collapsed to their knees gasping for air. Orchid stood still panting heavily but flexing the scimitar in her hand as if half expecting the Headhunters to rush the group again. Raven took the hide-sack from Conar's shoulder and emptied the contents out so he could reclaim his weapons.

'I can't believe what happened to Avid,' gasped Conar.

'Be thankful it wasn't you,' answered Hacksaw who alone was not out of breath.

'What are we going to do?' asked Noakes between gasps for air.

'Continue on our mission,' replied Orchid, 'we all know there would be risks in this venture. We're all in this

for the gold, but to claim that reward won't be easy.'

'It never is,' Raven sighed.

Orchid glanced over at him and gave him a white teeth revealing smile. 'That was quite a trick, Birdy to get us out of the cooking pot their women were preparing for us at their village.'

'As I said when they ambushed us an opportunity to escape always presents itself you just have to be ready to act when it appears.'

'What was that creature?' asked Conar getting to his feet.

'A hydra,' answered Orchid. 'I remember the Queen of my tribe wore a hydra skin cloak. She had slain such a beast single-handedly.'

'Over here,' said Hacksaw suddenly from the opposite side of the glade. As they had engaged in idle banter, the Black Elf had reconnoitered the environs they had found themselves in.

His four companions moved over to his position and looked through the trees to where his outstretched hand pointed towards.

Beyond the glade about twenty-five meters from their location was a rock hewn dais which had several steps leading up to it. At the back of the dais was a large stone pillar and in the center of that column the rescuers could see the same trident design that had been on the forehead of the harpy Orchid had disemboweled back on the Storm Giant.

'I sense strong magic here,' said the Black Elf. 'We must tread carefully.' 'Of course,' agreed Orchid. 'Birdy, why don't you go over there and scout out what it is?'

Raven gave Orchid a look of disapproval, but quickly slipped out of the glade and headed towards the dais. 'Magic,' he muttered to himself as he kept a low profile against the jungle ground. 'Why does it always have to be magic?'

TO BE CONTINUED

FF



Every issue we try to give you *Out of the Pit* – a mini-bestiary of monsters drawn from across the world of Titan and beyond. Each illustrated creature entry is broken down into two sections: one concerns game statistics, and the other is a longer description of the creature and its special features. The statistics* listed for each creature are: SKILL, STAMINA, Attacks, Weapon Used, Habitat, Number Encountered, Type, Reaction and Intelligence.

Please, please, please submit your own creatures for inclusion in *Out of the Pit*!!! Make sure they conform to the format presented here and send them to me, Andrew Wright, the *Out of the Pit* Editor, at greyarea13@hotmail.com – I look forward to reading your fearsome and fiendish contributions!

A GUEST LECTURE FROM ASTRAGAL, SENIOR WIZARD OF THE KHULIAN MAGE ORDER, AT THE SCHOOL OF MAGIC IN THE FOREST OF YORE

"Settle down there at the back! I know you Allansians find it difficult to concentrate, but please, bear with me. I'd like to talk today about a couple of denizens of the Dark Chasms beneath the kingdom of Gorak in southern Khul. You may never make it over the ocean to Khul, but it always pays to be prepared.

After all, I'm sure we've all heard the cautionary tale of the mystic Enstafelis, who, after a long fast, ate their way through an orchard of Bitter-sweet Fruit, wrongly thinking they were Bomba Fruit, and suffered indigestion so cripplingly severe they still talk about it to this day in the taverns of Salamonis. Now, where was I? Ah yes, the..."

GORAK GRYPHON

by Luke Sharp and Andrew Wright

SKILL: 8

STAMINA: 10

ATTACKS: 2

WEAPONS USED: Large Claw or Fire Breath (see below)

HABITAT: Caves, Mountains, Hills

NUMBER ENCOUNTERED: 1-2

TYPE: Monster

REACTION: Hostile

INTELLIGENCE: Low

"You wake up to find yourself chained to a rack on a great cliff top, overlooking a vast cavern. Your Sword and belongings are still on you and you can feel Tabasha in your pocket. Standing all around are Orcs wearing the fighting armour of the Mailed Fist: the symbol of the elite Xokusai Orcs. The captain stands next to you and is obviously waiting for someone: 'Damn Khuddam; kill my soldiers for sport and then don't turn up for the Chase.' A nearby lieutenant reminds him that the ceremony must begin at the appointed time laid down by the prophecy of Mukinahdun. At the mention of this word all the Xokusai Orcs kneel down and stab their daggers into the ground. Then the captain calls out: 'The Chase has begun. Release the prey and summon the Gryphons!' Your bonds are cut and a drum pounds out a regular

rhythm, until a flapping of wings and snapping and snarling announce the arrival of the Gryphons..."
(Chasms of Malice, 64)

The GRYPHONS of the kingdom of Gorak and surrounds are rather different to those found elsewhere on Titan. Also known as Griffins or Griffons, these monsters normally take the form of a lion with the head and wings of an eagle. Some variants have an eagle's legs and talons as their forelegs instead. Gryphons from Gorak however, have the body of a lion and the wings of a Dragon, as well as the Dragon's ability to breathe fire at their enemies. They can do this once every other Attack Round, and their opponent must make a successful *Test for Luck* or be burnt for 2 extra STAMINA points of damage (in addition to any losses they may suffer from the beast's claws).

Interestingly, no mention is given of their type of head, so it could resemble an eagle (like other Griffins); a Dragon (given their breath weapon); or a lion (in which case they would look like the more powerful but non-fire-breathing creatures called Dracons). In any case, this level of variation is common in Titan and readily observed in other monsters such as Manticores or Hydras.



*An explanation of all these statistics (except "Weapon Used") can be found in the original *Out of the Pit* (p.15/11-13. See also *Warlock* #7 p.10-11). An explanation of the "Weapon Used" category can be found in *Dungeoneer* (p.153-156 and 164-165).

Gorak Gryphons were first recorded from the Fellscar Crag, deep underground in the Dark Chasms that lie beneath this isolated corner of Khul. Here they were being used by the elite Xokusai Orcs of the Mailed Fist in a semi-religious ceremony called the Chase. Prisoners had to scramble down a rocky cliff-face dodging the attentions of the Gryphons, their Orc handlers, and, at the bottom of the cliff, the tentacled menace that is the fabled Beast of Fellscar Crag. However, as the Gryphons lack any proper specializations for subterranean life, it is likely the Orcs captured them from above ground locations. We could speculate therefore that highland areas in this part of Khul, such as the mountainous Lesser Ilkhans, probably are home to the Gorak Gryphons. Why this variant of Gryphon has such a localized distribution is unknown, but there is certainly no shortage of evil wizards and sorceresses in the vicinity who would be keen to claim responsibility for their existence!

[Originally appeared in *Chasms of Malice*: 64, 67, 217, 291, 301, 372]

KHUDDAM

by Luke Sharp and Andrew Wright

SKILL: 10

STAMINA: 12

ATTACKS: 3

WEAPONS USED: See below

HABITAT: Caves, Dungeons, Ruins

NUMBER ENCOUNTERED: 1

TYPE: Undead

REACTION: Hostile

INTELLIGENCE: High

"...in that year did We halt the Malice that was afflicting our Kingdom. But at great cost! We lost our beloved brother Orghuz to the Evil, and in a mighty struggle We cast Him into the Dark Chasms, and did entrust the noble Gaddon Warriors to guard Him and His Khuddam spawn, for all eternity..."
Fragment from *The Annals and Histories of Tancred the Magnificent*, King of Gorak

The Seven KHUDDAM, also known as the Seven Fell Servants, are a much-dreaded group of powerful



and malevolent beings of mysterious origins. They serve the Dark Lord Orghuz, who is imprisoned with them in the Chasms beneath Gorak. Both Orghuz and the Khuddam are held in check by the age-old powers of the Great Seals and the True Shield, which are held in the deepest vaults of Gorak Keep. Should the Seals be broken and the Shield stolen, the Khuddam will roam free and marshal the Fellcohorts – an army of Orcs, Goblins and Trolls, many of which are mounted on horned Koyunlu beasts. Meanwhile, Orghuz will attempt to destroy the power of the True Shield. If this happens, the Khuddam will have the ability to multiply exponentially:

"...first there will be 49 [Khuddam], then 2,401, then 5,764,801, until they become uncountable hordes, and Orghuz becomes invulnerable..."
(*Chasms of Malice*, p. 22)

In appearance, the Khuddam are tall humanoids wearing voluminous black hooded cloaks of fine chain mail, with glowing red eyes, long fangs (often spattered in blood from a recent meal!), and clawed hands. Further details, such as gender and preferred weapon, depend on which one of the Seven Khuddam you have had the misfortune to encounter:

BARKEK: Male, fights with a jagged-edged sword full of treacherous rip-hooks (damage as per Two-handed Sword)

CHURKA: Female, fights unarmed (damage as per Large Claw)

FRIANKARA: Female – the Chief Khuddam (SKILL 12 STAMINA 16), fights with either a two-headed axe (damage as per Battle-axe) or long poisonous claws (damage as per Very Large Claw)

GESHRAK: Male, fights with a scimitar (damage as per Sword)

GRIFFKEK: Male, fights with a scimitar (damage as per Sword)

GURSKUT: Male, fights unarmed (damage as per Large Claw)

KAHHRAC: Male, fights with a massive scimitar (damage as per Two-handed Sword)

All Khuddam possess various other powers including hypnotism, tracking (using their excellent sense of smell), and shape-changing. Lastly, it is implied that they are nearly immune to all attacks save that of the Shining Sword being wielded by Tancred's Heir. All of these abilities, together with their appearance, suggest that the Khuddam are actually a type of Vampire, and thus Undead.

We know far too little about their origins however. For example, we do not know if the Khuddam were original companions of Orghuz, transformed to Evil like him by the Malice; or whether they were creatures of the Malice itself, assigned to Orghuz's service; or perhaps great warriors corrupted personally by Orghuz at a later date. What we do know though is that their process of unchecked exponential procreation (via a spawn-like intermediary stage composed of a strange powdery substance), suggests the Malice itself is a powerful entity and likely a Dark Lord of Chaos that has been somehow imprisoned on Titan. Woe betide all of us if it is finally freed!

[Originally appeared in *Chasms of Malice*: p.17, pp. 21-22, 32, 38, 47, 64, 72, 79, 95, 96, 126, 127, 163, 180, 182, 190, 210, 225, 243, 244, 269, 281, 284, 294, 299, 309, 312, 331, 352, 385, 389, 390]

The arrival of the 1990s provided a potent reminder of the passage of time. But you're never too old to learn new things, and so as *Fighting Fantasy* moved towards the tenth anniversary of Jackson and Livingstone's first enabling youngsters to go barging into the home of an elderly recluse, killing him and stealing his stuff, the gamebooks continued to provide object lessons in dealing with many of the trials the new decade might bring.

Master of Chaos

Vardrath the Necromancer wants corpses. Adventurers are very good at killing. If our hero is feeling morally ambiguous enough to run an errand for Vardrath, not only does he wind up with a black mark on his forehead (to say nothing of his CV), but he may wind up falling under the Necromancer's control. And what does Vardrath do in such a situation? Transform him into an undead minion, thereby squandering the adventuring skills that could have ensured a regular source of fresh bodies. Many of today's corporate leaders have a similarly short-sighted approach to immediate profit, and I'm not sure whether the comparison

is more insulting to them or to the Necromancer.

Moral: Instant gratification often comes at the cost of long-term gain. Consider the bigger picture before you go for that too-good-to-be-true offer.

Black Vein Prophecy

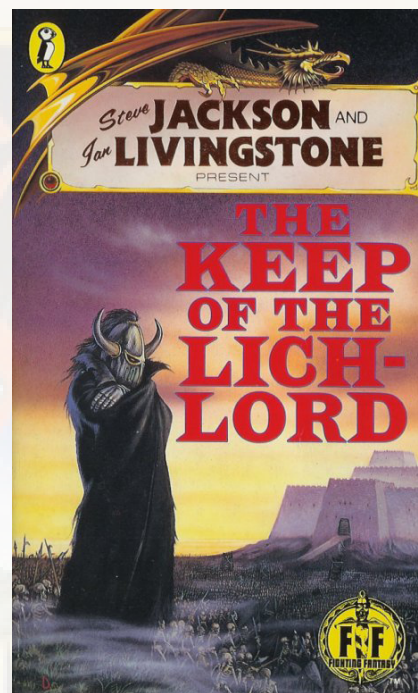
For much of this adventure you remember nothing significant about your identity or past, yet it only takes a passing encounter with the aftereffects of assorted magical powers to remind you how to use them yourself, and you have no difficulty in identifying a Chang whistle the moment you see it (which is more than can be said for the vast majority of people reading the book). Still, that's not so unrealistic when you consider the way all sorts of random trivia can come to mind at just the right moment during a pub quiz, while you can know someone for years and still spend every single conversation you have with them cringing at the thought of having to admit that you can't recall what their name is.

Moral: Not only are there known knowns, known unknowns, and unknown unknowns, but there are even unknown knowns.

The Keep of the Lich-Lord

The Spear of Qadarnai slays Lord Mortis and prevents him from rising from the dead to resume his reign of terror, at least until some idiot grave robber pulls it from his corpse. And what does the revenant Mortis do with the instrument of his former downfall? Leaves it lying around in his old tomb, where anyone investigating his return with a view to putting a stop to it might find the thing, with just a mildly spooky 'keep out' sign and one low-grade zombie guardian to try and keep would-be heroes from getting their hands on it. Not so much Lord of the undead as the brain-dead.

Moral: Much inconvenience can be avoided by putting things away when they're finished with.



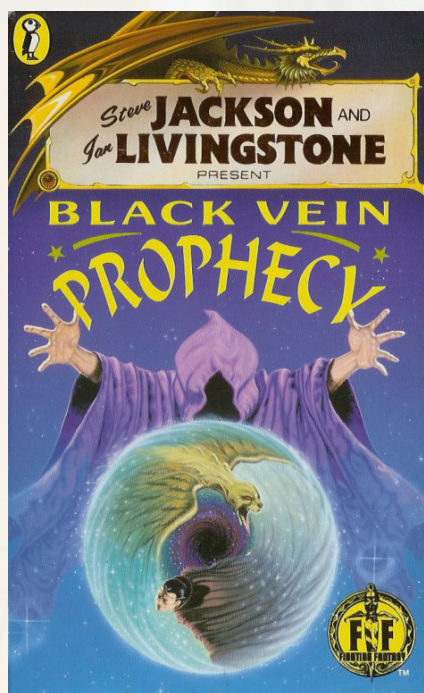
Legend of the Shadow Warriors

On the face of it, Urtha looks like she should be main baddie material – evil, ancient, undead, almost unkillable – and yet she's just a minor annoyance encountered along the way. But there's a simple explanation for her relatively lowly villain status: she's an idiot. Taunt her just a bit, and to try and impress you, she'll do whatever you suggest – even the one thing that can lead to her destruction. No wonder she doesn't rank alongside the sort of serious opponent who can only be thwarted by showing them a gem, opening the curtains or winning a variant on scissors-paper-stone...

Moral: Showing off in the hope of gaining the respect of people who don't even like you rarely ends well.

Spectral Stalkers

Globus the Archmage's scheming has finally paid off, and he is on the verge of becoming Lord of all the Macrocosmos, when the mug he's all but tricked into delivering supreme power into his hands unexpectedly proves not quite so dim after all, and hoists him by his own petard. Mind you, if Globus had thought to make his instructions to the Spectral Stalkers countermandable, he could still have turned the situation around



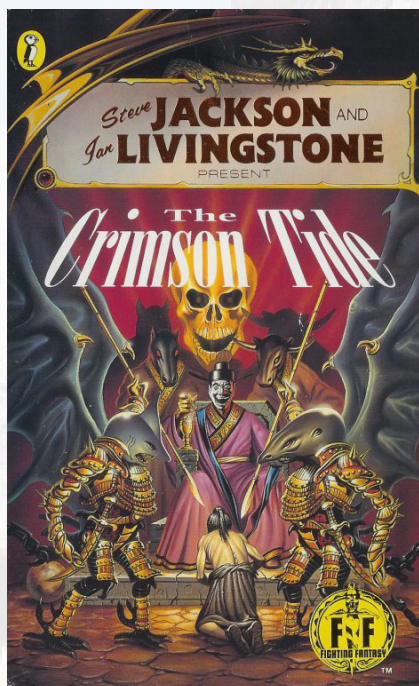
ED JOLLEY is here to see how the range equipped its readers to face a world in which the Iron Curtain and the Iron Lady were both succumbing to Metal Rot...

and got all that he wanted (or 'all', for short). Lucky for everyone that he did mess up – after all, what if he'd got bored and decided to destroy all reality, and then changed his mind just too late to stop it from happening? That would have been a rubbish way to go.

Moral: When the computer says 'This operation cannot be undone,' make absolutely sure you really do want to do it before you click on 'Yes'.

Tower of Destruction

Take time out from your urgent quest to aid a wounded Barbarian, and you'll have to either accept his invitation to a party, further delaying your confrontation with the destroyer of your home, or risk insulting him by declining. Accept, and not only do you have to endure the social awkwardness of being at a social gathering where everyone else knows everyone else, and you're the dopey outsider who doesn't know the gossip, in-jokes or etiquette (using the wrong club for the fish course is so embarrassing), but you also give your enemies time to grow in strength and numbers. Next time (if there is a next time, what with the greater danger you now have to face), just send a bottle and your apologies.



Moral: Despite the old saying, there are times when politeness does cost something. Know when it's worth paying that price, and when you're better off causing minor offence.

The Crimson Tide

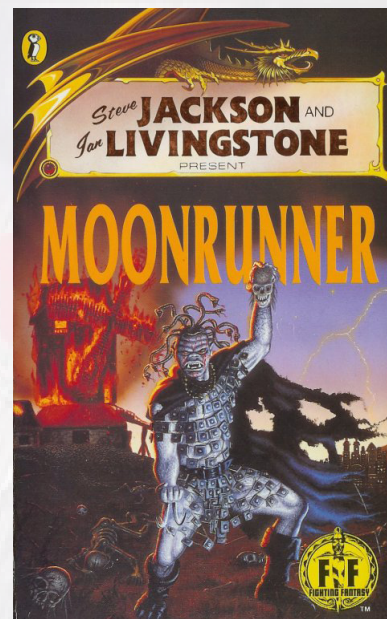
King Maior's enlightened reign wound up allowing ruthless mercenaries to oppress and abuse his subjects owing to the actions of his secretly serpentine advisor Pantu. Back in this reality, Paul Mason's innovative gamebook wound up attracting considerable misdirected ire from reviewers owing to the actions of his Mudworm-enhancing editor Gascoigne. But don't take this parallel as suggesting that I think a bad review is in any way comparable with large-scale slaughter and pillage. I mean, some of those reviewers get really nasty.

Moral: Try to avoid using middlemen whose aims aren't in tune with yours, or the end result might be very different from what you wanted.

Moonrunner

You've avoided all manner of potentially lethal traps, made a good start on your Notura collection, evaded or killed numerous cabalists, and finally captured your arch-nemesis Gruul. But are you happy? Apparently not, as you just have to go into a protracted whinge about how you only sought Gruul out because he ruined your life with that mean trick he played on you back in the war. Maybe you're hoping that this will make him feel bad, or at least spoil his day by revealing that his past naughtiness has indirectly led to his present failure to wreak havoc on the civilised world, but whatever your intent, you're disappointed, as it just gives him a chance to brainwash you and force you to do the wreaking for him. Bet you (and the thousands you slaughtered) wish you'd kept your stupid mouth shut, now.

Moral: Bearing grudges can be bad for your health. Try to let bygones be bygones.



Siege of Sardath

Unlike most FF opponents, the impostor who attacks the hero at the start of the adventure may decide to try and Escape if the fight goes badly for him. Unlike most FF players, he may only do so when he's already been wounded often enough that the free blow his opponent gets to strike as he turns to flee will prove fatal. While the rules charmingly refer to this kind of damage as 'the price of cowardice,' in this instance it's more a case of 'the price of not paying enough attention to your STAMINA score, you great twit'.

Moral: Put something off for too long, and you might never actually get the chance to do it at all.

Return to Firetop Mountain

Zagor's murderer also killed a group of Orcs as they squabbled over the bones in their soup. When Zagor rose from the grave, the Orcs were brought back from the dead as animated skeletons. Calling them boneheads would be a cheap gag, but given that they chose to resume their argument and continue with it until the second adventurer to slay Zagor happened by and broke it (and them) up for good, it's far from inappropriate.

Moral: Sometimes it's best to agree to disagree and let the matter drop.

FF

Advanced Fighting Fantasy – The Roleplaying Game

Written by Graham Bottley • Illustrated by various artists
Arion Games • Published May 9th 2011 • RRP US\$29.99

T

wenty years after we were first given the *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* system, it

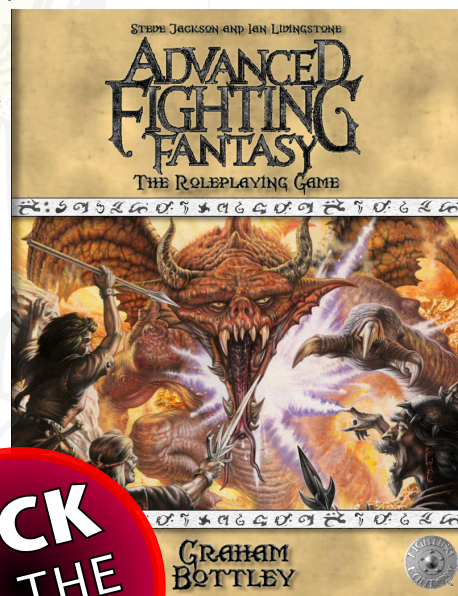
returns revamped and refreshed from Arion Games. With a previously established system such as this, its fans will have no doubt created in their minds their own list of things to be changed or kept as they are, giving author Graham Bottley a fine line to walk. How much should be changed to give the system a much needed spring clean and how much should remain lest its fans abandon ship?

Immediately apparent is that in appropriately the larger format for the manual, as opposed to the paperback book look of the previous iteration, is that it straight away feels *more like* a traditional RPG. And after the briefest of introductions we encounter another RPG manual staple: the example adventure.

than a campaign in of itself – we'll have to wait for further releases from Arion Games for that.

Meanwhile, onto the rest of the contents of the book. Hero creation seems fairly straight forward and far more balanced than the original edition and the sections that follow, outlining in more detail other factors such as combat and magic, make many welcome minor repairs to the game system. This then is *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* with a better tuned engine.

At the same time Bottley takes the time to tie the whole thing a bit more closely to its origins. The original edition from 1989 shared little with *Fighting Fantasy* beyond basic stats and the world of Titan. Here the magic system harks back



**PICK
OF THE
ISSUE!**

which was passable for the mid-Eighties. Today such a layout looks quite tired and

does such a great book a disservice. Added to this is the somewhat washed out look of some of the artwork and the illustration on page 157 sticks out, looking quite poor against the rest of the illustrations.

...makes many welcome minor repairs to the game system. This then is *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* with a better tuned engine.

Curiously, Bottley has opted to fashion an amalgam of *The Wishing Well* and *Shaggradd's Hives of Peril* (both originally from Steve Jackson's *Fighting Fantasy - The Role-playing Game*) rather than pen an original adventure. While that does make the tale familiar to long time *Fighting Fantasy* readers, I'm not wholly convinced that it sells the *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* system particularly well. Both original adventures were basic hack n' slash dungeon crawls and this is the same, which doesn't really the back cover blurb of "new and exciting adventures".

But then that isn't the true purpose of this book, which is focussed on being the tools to build adventures rather

to that of the *Sorcery!* series of books (although using MAGIC POINTS rather than STAMINA to power the system), and the Priests are better linked with the deities established in *Titan – The Fighting Fantasy World*, religion having more impact on gaming than token lip service.

The rest of the volume economically sets out the information needed to get your own original multi-player adventures up and running with a minimum of fuss. All in all it is a tight package.

Perhaps the big letdown with this title is the formatting. In trying to tie the books all together it follows the layout of *Titan* and *Out of the Pit*,

In the end this is a minor quibble as the manual achieves what it set out to do, which was to bring *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* kicking and screaming into the twenty-first century. This then is a must buy if you are into RPG gaming and is a significant contribution to the *Fighting Fantasy* legacy. With the goal of refurbishing *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* achieved, I think Graham can sit back and relax with some small measure of pride at this achievement. Thankfully however, Graham isn't a man to rest on his laurels as he gears up to expand and improve *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* even further. I'm certainly looking forward to what else might be on offer in the future.

SPOILERS!

SPOILERS!

SPOILERS!

SPOILERS!

SPOILERS!

SPOILERS!

Out of the Pit – Monsters of Advanced Fighting Fantasy

Written by Marc Gascoigne • Illustrated by various artists
Arion Games • Published May 9th 2011 • RRP US\$24.99

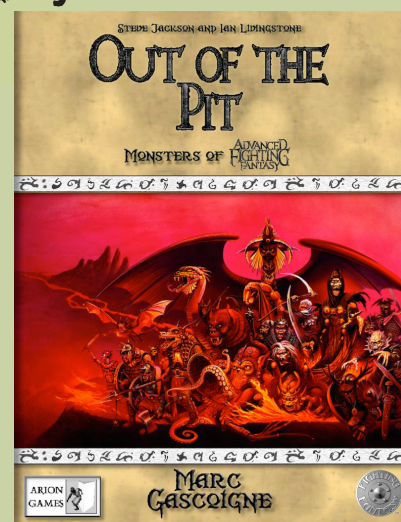
Alongside *Titan – The Fighting Fantasy World*, *Out of the Pit* was one of my two personal “holy grails” of the *Fighting Fantasy* series. I only ever saw one copy of each in the wild throughout the 80s and then only briefly, so the pair remained these almost “mystic” tomes of Titan knowledge always just beyond my reach (I could never find a store that stocked copies).

Today *Out of the Pit* is a very handy reference work for the inspired amateur *Fighting Fantasy* author (or professional if you happen to be one of the lucky few). Gascoigne has taken a broad sweep of monsters from roughly the first third of the range, and thrown in a number of his own invention, to create an easy to browse

guide.

As a simple guide to the creatures that prowl Titan it does its assigned job and does it well, ably supported by the artwork pinched from the gamebooks (as well as a few additions for monsters not illustrated in the books). For a while the book suffered the indignity of the B format, but with its reprint by Arion Games I observe with some relief that it returns to a similar but different oversized format (although the eight full page pieces of colour art haven’t survived the various transitions). I feel the larger page size lends the book (and the accompanying *Titan*) an added air of legitimacy.

On the downside it is a straight reprint of the original edition with no attempt to make changes to the



monster stats to account for the revisions of the main rules of the game, meaning if you already own a copy of the book then (unless a devoted collector) you are probably best off giving this a skip.

Titan – The Advanced Fighting Fantasy World

Written by Marc Gascoigne • Illustrated by various artists
Arion Games • Published May 9th 2011 • RRP US\$24.99

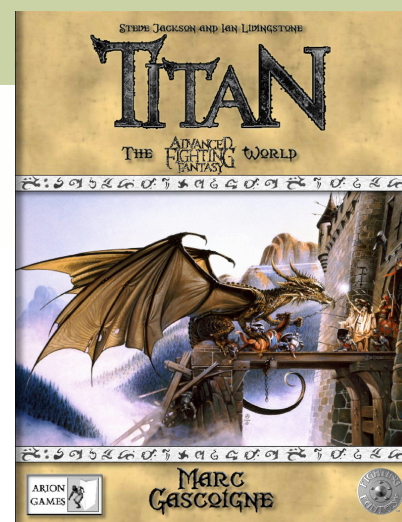
Like *Out of the Pit*, *Titan – The Advanced Fighting Fantasy World* from Arion Games is a straight reproduction of the original oversized edition from 1986.

This immediately results in two downsides to an otherwise excellent book. The first is, like *Out of the Pit*, the reproductions of the art have an awful washed out look like the toner cartridge of the printer was running dry. The other is that time wasn’t given for cartographer Steve Luxton to update and revise the maps presented here (and again in *Out of the Pit*). The lack of revised maps however does give hope that perhaps future volumes will arise to correct this issue with the geography of Titan.

So if you don’t already own a copy of

this book, what can you look forward to from its contents? Gascoigne has done a tremendous job of tying together the many and disparate snapshots of Titan provided by the gamebooks to produce an easy-to-read guide that at the same time both answers many questions fans had about the universe they played in, but also leaves enough space for other writers to enter the fray and fashion areas and regions of their own.

Thus the book is more of an overview of the fantasy world than an encyclopedic enterprise to religiously document every facet of Titan (thankfully the wikia now exists for that purpose). Gascoigne dutifully give the major races a history as well as notable human characters, making the effort to sprinkle the book with minor details such a



battle plans, maps, runes, and charts which help to break up what would otherwise be vast acres of text. It is these small details that help give life and credibility to the world of Titan. It also means *Titan* is something beyond a guide that you dip into for information like *Out of the Pit*, but a book you can read from cover to cover in its own right. It is in this last respect that Gascoigne has produced something akin to a masterpiece for the *Fighting Fantasy* range.

FF

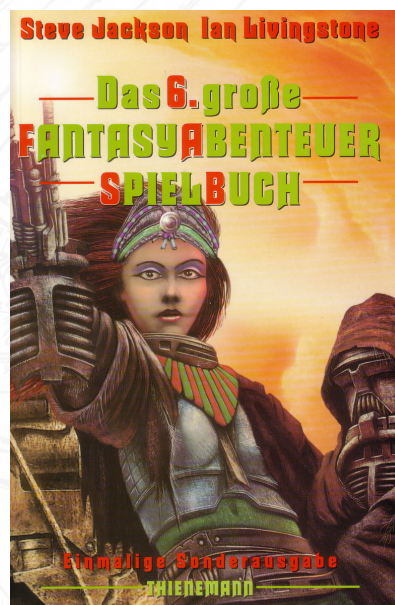
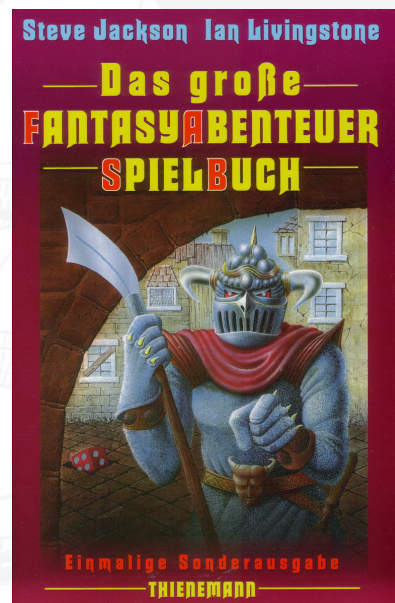
I intended to review the new *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* books in detail as re-released by Graham Bottley but I'd rather you read this review instead at www.rpg.net/reviews/archive/15/15307.phtml which deals with it nicely.

I will however say a little bit of what I think all the same. I can't say I am impressed because I am not. I am disappointed as I expected more from the re-release. Whilst content in the main book was updated, *Titan* and *Out of the Pit* was not. They have just all been reproduced in cheap covers. It would have been better if they were released as second editions with new content, maybe in hardback but certainly they should have reflected content of books released after the originals. That way we would have seen new monsters in *Out of the Pit* and new areas etc to further expand *Titan* for example. Maybe, even new artwork? I have hinted to Steve and Ian in the past that they should consider issuing hardback versions of these and the adventure gamebooks very much like recent *Lone Wolf* re-releases. Am I alone in that request, maybe it is just the collector in me and the collector in me is still pleased to have them in my possession, than not.

Not sure how I missed the A2 *Sorcery!* poster that a Paul Arneil sent me a picture of the other month, probably because I do not have a copy and they are notoriously hard to find, as invariably posters got destroyed unless you were Paul who had the foresight to ask for it when he came by it in the 80's after seeing it displayed in his local bookshop and was given it after they finished had with it. (I wonder if he wants to sell it?) Not even regular trawls of Google images have dredged it up. The artwork is a map of Kakhabad by John Blanche used on the rare *Sorcery!* box set and also features on the back of *Warlock* magazine #5. John was also responsible for the interior and exterior artwork in the original *Sorcery!* series of books.

Who remembers *F.I.S.T* (*Fantasy Interactive Scenarios by Telephone*)? I had seen the adverts but never had the pleasure of playing it. It was a Steve Jackson creation that championed role-playing over the phone and must have cost the caller a fortune. Thanks to Jason Vince whom I am grateful to for sending me pictures of probably every known advert ever released for the system. When I get a chance I will post them up to my site for all to see.

More on the signed books I obtained



from Ian and this time German compilations (*Das Grosse Fantasy Abenteuer Spiel Buch*). Before I explore the various title translations in each one of the 6, here are few outtakes from the covers;

'Sammelband zum Superpreis' = 'Collection at a super price'

'Das Kultbuch von den Meistern des Fantasy-Spiels' = 'The cult book by the master of the fantasy game'

'einmelige sonderansgabe' = 'one special issue'

The contents of each compilation are as follows:

Book 1

- Die Zitadelle des Zauberers - *The Citadel of Chaos* (The Wizard's Citadel)
- Die Stadt der Diebe - *City of Thieves*
- Das Duell der Piraten - *Seas of Blood* (The Duel of the Pirates)

Book 2

- Der Hexenmeister vom Flammenden Berg - *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* (The Warlock of Flaming Mountain)
- Die Insel des Echsenkonigs - *Island of the Lizard King*
- Die Hohlen der Schneehexe - *Caverns of the Snow Witch* (The Caves of the Snow Witch)

Book 3

- Das Hollenhaus - *House of Hell* (The Hell House)
- Der Talisman des Todes - *Talisman of Death*
- Die Dämonen der Tiefe - *Demons of the Deep*

Book 4

- Der Fort der Finsternis - *The Forest of Doom* (The Survival of Darkness)
- Das Labyrinth des Todes - *Deathtrap Dungeon* (The Labyrinth of Death)
- Der Sumpf der Skorpione - *Scorpion Swamp* (The Bottoms of

the Scorpions)

Book 5

- Der Stern der Schmuggler - *The Rings of Kether* (The Star of the Smugglers)
- Der Tempel des Schreckens - *Temple of Terror* (The Temple of Secrets)
- Der Wettstreit der Gladiatoren - *Trial of Champions* (The Rivalry between the Gladiators)

Book 6

- Das Schwert des Samurai - *Sword of the Samurai*
- Die Masken von Mayhem - *Masks of Mayhem*
- Das Universum der Unendlichkeit - *Starship Traveller* (The Universe of Infinity)

Some translations are utterly ridiculous, just look at *Scorpion Swamp*, but how timely was it to have a bookish German student in the house when I was researching this article and according to him the translations are okay but some could be better. Whilst staying with me he only went and read the first four of the *Game of Thrones* series of books, in English, in a week! He said he even read a Dan Brown on the way over and will read another on the way back! Still can't work out why he was over here to learn English if he can



consume books like that. Sadly he had not heard of the books nor showed any interest other than to help me.

Since I have been dropping other book names and authors dare I give *Destiny Quest* a shout in my article? Whoops, just did. I must admit, whilst being a die-hard *Fighting Fantasy* fan I can't help but be curious as to what it is all about. It looks good, the reviews are good so me thinks I will call for a copy. If you are reading this Mr Michael J Ward, please get in-touch.

What do you all make of the recent news that *Deathtrap Dungeon* will also be made into a movie, "...a cross between *Saw* and *Gladiator*" has been quoted, will it live up those high expectations? Can't remember the book being as savage as the movie *Saw*. On the subject of movies, we haven't seen an update for *House of Hell* since this time last year without a new word of progress or release date. Whilst it is exciting stuff to see the books turned into movies, or at least interactive ones, I do hope they work out. My guess is they are lined up for next year's anniversary.

As a little bit of fun you should follow the link vimeo.com/22618055 and see what lengths some will go too to get famous. Make sure you watch right until the end and you will see why it is relevant. The person behind this movie is also producing *Deathtrap Dungeon*. Surprise surprise.

On the subject of *Deathtrap Dungeon*, I finally succumbed and purchased an iPhone, subsequently the first app I installed was just that. Having played it through several times without success so far, I continue to persevere, however unless I am being completely thick, is the answer to paragraph 382, 150 pounds or not as it sends you off to paragraph 227 which says I am wrong. What will my next app be, *Sorcery!*, *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*, *The Citadel of Chaos* or *Creature of Havoc*? You decide.

Success! Finally, no less than seven books in, I managed to complete one. Was it the change in dice? I couldn't find ol' unlucky reds, so instead used so-fresh-so-clean green.

Rolled a SKILL of 11, big help, even if I lost two points later on while trying to chip a gemstone (Why? Because it was an option, why else?), which I regained upon finding a vitally important sword. Add to that a STAMINA of 21 and 8 LUCK and I thought, yeah, I've got a shot at this.

There's a convoluted story behind why you've got to invade this island and depose this self-proclaimed king, which I won't go into except to say it's pretty noble, and rather suicidal. Regardless, you begin the adventure with a companion, Mungo, and if you know anything about the *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook series, it's that companions who aren't a part of your *Adventure Sheet* aren't permanent.

Anyway, there's a circus in town down the road, the infamous *Trial Of Champions*.

So we reach the titular island, Mungo's inevitably killed (by a Giant Crab of all things), and I'm right into eating and drinking random things. After defeating a band of headhunters, I chowed on their bananas and coconuts, receiving a single STAMINA point in reward. One? It makes you wonder what the hell my normal

provisions are made of, considering they each give me four STAMINA points, and I can fit 10 of them in my backpack (with all the other crap I'm carrying, it must be some kind of spaceman food). Later in the book, I'm forced to use one meal – the explanation being I need salt to rid my legs of leeches. Salt, huh? Magic.

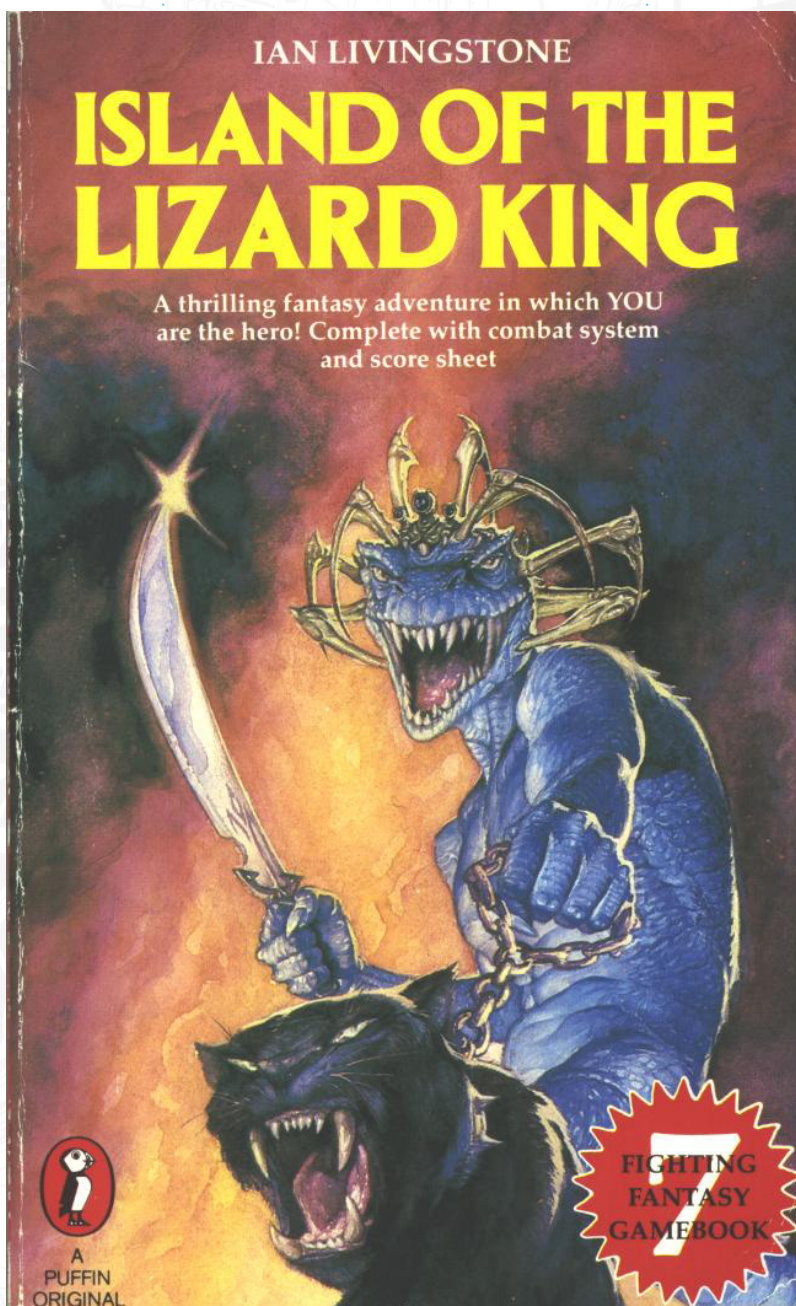
I the text said I could to eat what was left. Um, nuh-uh.

Some pygmies gave me some berries in exchange for a hand-axe. Not having learnt my lesson, I ate some, and my STAMINA increased by TWO STAMINA points. Salt is four, berries are two, but bananas and coconuts are a meagre one. Imagine if I found a hamburger on this island!

No hamburgers, but something equally as awesome showed up – a 'Pouch of Unlimited Contents'. Ooer. It sounds like something out of *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, but here it was, in medieval Allansia. The only use I had for it putting the spear and axe I didn't have into it so they wouldn't fall off a raft while fighting a crocodile, but I'm sure it came in handy carrying all that damn salt I must've needed to supply me with enough nutrients to heal my wounds.

So I battled and ate my way across the island, eventually reaching the mines where the enslaved dwarves were kept. Before rescuing them however, I had to find them. And how did I find them? I quote:

A thought suddenly crosses your mind that perhaps the boots you are wearing might be enchanted. You put your foot up against the wall and try to walk up it. Sure enough, it works. You are wearing a magical pair of Boots of Climbing.



I even ate some fungus. It sprayed rash-inducing spores into my face, which cleared up pretty quickly. Still,

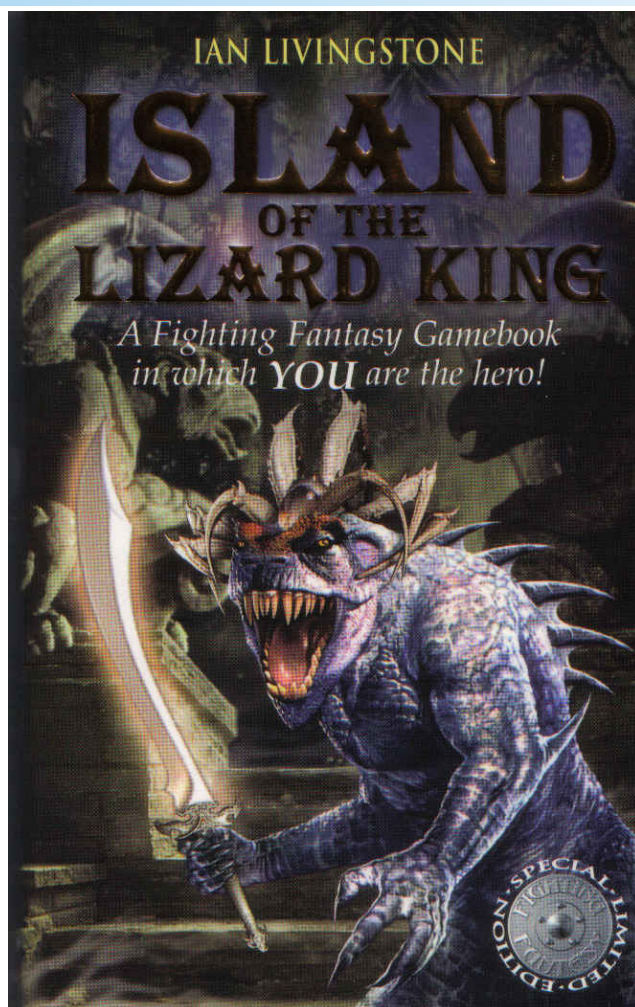
Remember reading your first *Fighting Fantasy* adventure? The desperate search for the items you need to win, the frantic dice rolls as you fight to stay in one piece mere paragraphs from your goal? **DAN SATHERLEY** recreates those tense moments by working his way through the series book by book and recording his efforts as he goes.

I don't often purchase new shoes, but from now on, will always take care to ask the shopkeeper if they are enchanted!

In my adventures underground I also acquired a pail of water, which I carried through a couple of fights, eventually giving to some Dwarfs. It's amazing the things you just know you'll need – like a monkey.

Where I work, we often joke about how cool it'd be to have an army of monkeys to do our bidding, but when I was told the Lizard King (I can't stop picturing Jim Morrison) is afraid of monkeys, I realised this book was way cooler than I remember.

So I took Bubbles on my shoulder like some kind of primatical pirate, and went into battle, dispatching a Hobgoblin and a Cyclops with



this bizarre, but obviously useful, distraction.

Turns out (shocking!) the Lizard King is actually afraid of monkeys. Why? Well, who wouldn't be afraid of a monkey willing to sit on the shoulder of a complete stranger as said stranger fought and battled his way through an army of Lizard Men, Hobgoblins and Cyclopes? Cyclops?

In the end, despite having no more than four stamina points and no magic, and just salty food, the Lizard King himself was a pushover. There's no record of whether Jim Morrison was afraid of monkeys, but even he'd have put up a better fight. Drunk.

One from seven! If this was cricket I'd be screwed, but I'm just glad to be on the scoreboard...

FF

COMING IN ISSUE #8

MINI ADVENTURE:

VENGEANCE AT MIDNIGHT

by Alexander Ballingall

Rumours are swirling in the Titan City underworld that a new super villain is poised to unleash a reign of terror upon the unsuspecting city. YOU, the Silver Crusader, defender of Titan City, are needed to unmask and defeat this super villain before the chaos can spread. But can you unravel the hints and clues you have gathered in time to make a difference?

INTERVIEW:

TEMPTING TALISMAN

We catch up with Ross Brierley as he talks about adapting *Talisman of Death* for the PlayStation and what the future can expect from Laughing Jackal...

INTERVIEW: CHRIS STERLING

INTERVIEW: JAMIE FRY

AFF MINI ADVENTURE: THE TOWER OF CREDOZ

THE BOOK IN WHICH YOU ARE THE HERO

THE ADVENTURE GAME

EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW I LEARNT FROM

READING FIGHTING

FANTASY GAMEBOOKS

CHRONICLE OF HEROES

FIGHTING FANTASY

COLLECTOR

FIGHTING DANTASY



